More US military advisers to play active role

Story Below, Column 1

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Philanderers, lying pols, beware

LONDON—Philandering husbands and lying politicians, beware.

American scientists may have discovered a new technique for detect-

PHILANDERERS/ A5

HULI NA KAAGAD MASKI 'DI NA HUMABA ANG ILONG

Baron's friend tags YOU chair in killing

Witness: Cardeño angry over LTO ouster

By Christian Esguerra and Martin Marfil
in Manila
Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

A CLOSE friend of Baron Alexander Cervantes surfaced yesterday and accused Supt. Rafael Cardeño, chair of the Young Officers Union, of masterminding the killing of Cervantes.

The witness, who said he had known Cervantes for 10 years, claimed that Cardeño had the "strongest" motive to have Cervantes killed.

Cardeño was blaming Cervantes, a self-described YOU spokesperson, for his getting kicked out of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) last November, the witness told the Inquirer.

"He was really very angry with Bong (Cardeño) for exposing his involvement in anomalies," said the witness, who teaches a management subject at a university in Metro Manila.

Police yesterday went to the witness to convince him to come out in the open and share everything he knew about Cervantes and his activities.

The witness declined although he allowed the Inquirer to talk to him on condition that he would not be named for now. He said those who killed Cervantes were "highly organized. My life is at stake. I'll

BARON'S/ A13

EDWIN BACASMAS

A LOT of coup talks have doubled security for President Macapagal's four-day "roadshow" that will take her to Cotabato City today where she will hold her first out-of-town Cabinet meeting. Already, police are on alert at the ARMM office in Cotabato where she will induct its new governor, Parouk Hussin.

MIRAFLOR CASE

Isafp looking for 'bigger' names

By Carlito Pablo

THE INTELLIGENCE Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) is on the lookout for officers "bigger" and "higher" than a senior Navy lieutenant who, along with eight of his men, is being grilled for possession of a large cache of explosives.

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, yesterday said Isafp was "still undertaking an investigation because what they have caught is a lower ranking officer." He was referring to Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor, who was arrested on Dec. 30.

"They think bigger, higher ex-officers are involved," Tiglao said.

At a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said investigators were also looking into the possible liability of Lt. Commander Rosauro Sarmiento,

ISAFP/ A5

Valeroso, Cervantes: 17 text exchanges

By TJ Burgonio

ON THE day he was murdered, Baron Cervantes had a total of 17 text message exchanges with Supt. Diosdado Valeroso. *(See story below.)*

The lengthy exchange was not about the usual trivia. It involved touchy issues such as the leadership of the Young Officers' Union (YOU) just hours before Cervantes was shot pointblank in the head on Monday in Las Piñas, a police official said yesterday.

Valeroso sent the last text message that read: "*Di tayo magkaintindihan sa text. Magkita na lang tayo* (We can't understand each other. Let's just meet)," according to Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez, director of the Southern Police District.

Cervantes' Nokia 9210 cellular phone was found at the scene of the crime at the corner of Times Street and the Alabang-Zapote Road in Pamplona, Las Piñas.

But Valeroso countered that contrary to police claims, it was Cervantes who sent the message that read: "*Hehehe!!! I know mahirap sa txt talaga, di tayo magkaintindihan!!! Ingat* (I know it's hard to understand each other through text. Careful)."

"It was providential that among

VALEROSO/ A13

'Someone is laying groundwork'

By Nancy C. Carvajal

"IT IS only the appetizer," was Supt. Diosdado Valeroso's reading of the murder of Baron Cervantes.

"Someone is laying the groundwork for a graver undertaking," he told the Inquirer during an interview on Wednesday night.

"It's divide and rule, and the perceived enemy (YOU) is neutralized by a scenario that would make the group look bad," he said.

Cervantes was the sacrificial victim, Valeroso said.

"Baron was dispensable," he said.

He said Cervantes was apparently chosen for a desired result. Because the death of somebody insignificant may be considered an ordinary crime.

Valeroso said that someone with stature could dilute the objective of the masterminds and could trigger an avalanche of protest like the kill-

SOMEONE/ A13

Malacañang blames foes; foes blame Malacañang

By Carlito Pablo, Juliet L. Javellana and Armand N. Nocum

WHO killed Baron Cervantes?

Malacañang and critics of the administration have come up with different theories, implying that the other camp could be behind the killing of the self-described spokesperson of the Young Officers Union (YOU).

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday admitted that President Macapagal-Arroyo was "very concerned" that the killing could be part of a plot to overthrow the Macapagal administration.

Ms Macapagal said a day after the killing that people plotting against the government had a hand in the murder.

Tiglao acknowledged that the government's intelligence agencies had reached a "consensus" that some people might be plotting to overthrow the government. But he said the plot would not work.

He said the plotters did not have enough followers, arms and issues against the Macapagal administration that would make a coup successful.

But hours before his afternoon briefing, Tiglao sought to downplay talks of a coup, comparing them to "stories that Jose Rizal and Elvis Presley are alive."

The People's Consultative Assembly (PCA) accused Malacañang of orchestrating the killing of Cervantes, saying the Palace stands to gain much from his death.

MALACAÑANG/ A13

25 US advisers arriving to play more active role

By Carlito Pablo

MORE US military advisers are arriving this month to play a more active role in the local counter-terrorist drive as President Macapagal-Arroyo pledged anew to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf within three months.

Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, Armed Forces spokesperson, said up to 25 US military advisers were expected to arrive in Western Mindanao on Jan. 15 "to train, advise and assist" Philippine troops in operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

"They (US advisers) will not be here to fight," Adan said. "But they will be helping us develop our fighting capabilities. The training will be on counter-terrorism, intelligence gathering and psychological operations."

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson

AFP/ A4

ROGER MARGALLO

INNOCENTS ABROAD: An average of 40 foreign children has been visiting here since the holidays unaccompanied by adults like the 20 Korean children who arrive here on Thursday. They are barred from entering the country until they pay a waiver.

Joker scores censorship, slams Sanchez

By Rocky Nazareno and Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE MALACAÑANG directive that all government statements be first cleared with it is tantamount to censorship, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

In a statement, the administration senator said Press Undersecretary Manuel Sanchez, who now functions as Malacañang's chief press coordinator, had no business barring Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo from discussing the $540-million deal between San Miguel Corp. (SMC) and Japanese brewer Kirin Co. Ltd.

Arroyo also said Sanchez's statement Wednesday that he would admonish Marcelo "to be more careful" in airing views that conflicted with that of President Macapagal-Arroyo was "anathema to free speech and the right of

JOKER/ A4

SIEMPRE, 'DI PWEDE!

Nur: No passport, no visa

By Norman Bordadora
and Dona Z. Pazzibugan

RENEGADE Moro leader Nur Misuari's chances of getting a visa to the United States, or any other country, are virtually nil as he doesn't even have that most basic of travel documents to stamp the visa on—a valid passport.

"The Department of Foreign Affairs canceled Misuari's passport immediately after the attack carried out by his followers against government facilities in Sulu. He doesn't even have a passport," said Assistant Secretary and DFA spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros yesterday.

Top officials of several government agencies met yesterday at DFA headquarters in Pasay City to discuss, among other things, Misuari's impending deportation from Malaysia.

Misuari, through his lawyer Elly Pamatong, had asked Malaysian authorities to allow him to apply for a US visa.

In a letter to Malaysian police Insp. General Norian Mai, Pamatong said Misuari had been invited by American black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan to go on a lecture tour of 41 universities across the US and to attend an Islamic conference in Los Angeles.

"There is also no need for the Philippines to ask the US not to give him a visa. We have an agreement with Malaysia that he would be returned to the Philippines and that has yet to be rescinded," Lecaros added.

Malacañang has gone ahead and finalized plans for the return of Misuari from Malaysia by Jan. 15.

The Cabinet oversight committee on internal security met Thursday night at the Palace to thresh out the details of Misuari's return.

The committee designated a team of eight members to escort Misuari from Malaysia composed of officials from the Philippine National Police, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Justice and the Armed Forces.

Malacañang has also decided where Misuari will be detained during his trial for rebellion, but refused to divulge details, "for his safety," according to presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao.

The family of Misuari now in Malaysia has asked that his trial be held in a third country, saying he would not get a fair trial in the Philippines, the Agence France Presse reported.

"The Philippines, according to the International Monetary Fund, is the fourth most corrupt country in the world, including its judiciary," Pamatong told a news conference in Malaysia Thursday.

"We would like him to be tried in a third country and if that country determines that he's in fact a terrorist, then he should be sent back to the Philippines," Pamatong said.

Misuari faces rebellion charges, punishable by 20 years in prison, for allegedly instigating the failed uprising in Jolo, Sulu, that claimed 113 lives.

His second wife, Roida T. Misuari, who arrived in Malaysia Sunday, dismissed as "black propaganda" the Philippine government's insistence that Misuari is a terrorist.

"He is not and can never be a terrorist... it was purely in self-defense. He is a freedom-fighter," she told the news conference.

"According to our sources, the fighting was triggered when government troops disarmed some of the regular MNLF integrees in their barracks. My husband did not give the order to attack," Mrs. Misuari said. ***With an AFP report***

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New laws to pave way for bad loans purchase

By Raul Dancel

THE PHILIPPINES is preparing a set of laws to pave the way for foreign investors to buy ballooning bad loans of local banks, the Bangko Sentral said Thursday.

Among those that have expressed interest in buying the non-performing loans (NPLs), according to an Agence France Presse report, are international investment houses Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs and the World Bank's International Finance Corp.

Lehman Brothers has reportedly pledged to invest $1 billion in the venture dubbed as the "Philippine Recovery Fund."

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said Lehman Brothers is already conducting a due diligence study with a major local bank with a view to establishing an asset management company (AMC) to buy NPLs.

He added that he was confident legislation covering the purchase of bad loans could be in place by March.

The legislation, he said in a television interview, was needed to make the NPLs attractive to buyers and clear up any legal questions over the loans and their collateral.

Among laws being prepared in Congress is one allowing the establishment of AMCs to take over the NPLs, which have been estimated at about P470 billion, or $9.03 billion, officials said.

Another proposed law would cover corporate bankruptcies and the restructuring of failed firms, Buenaventura said.

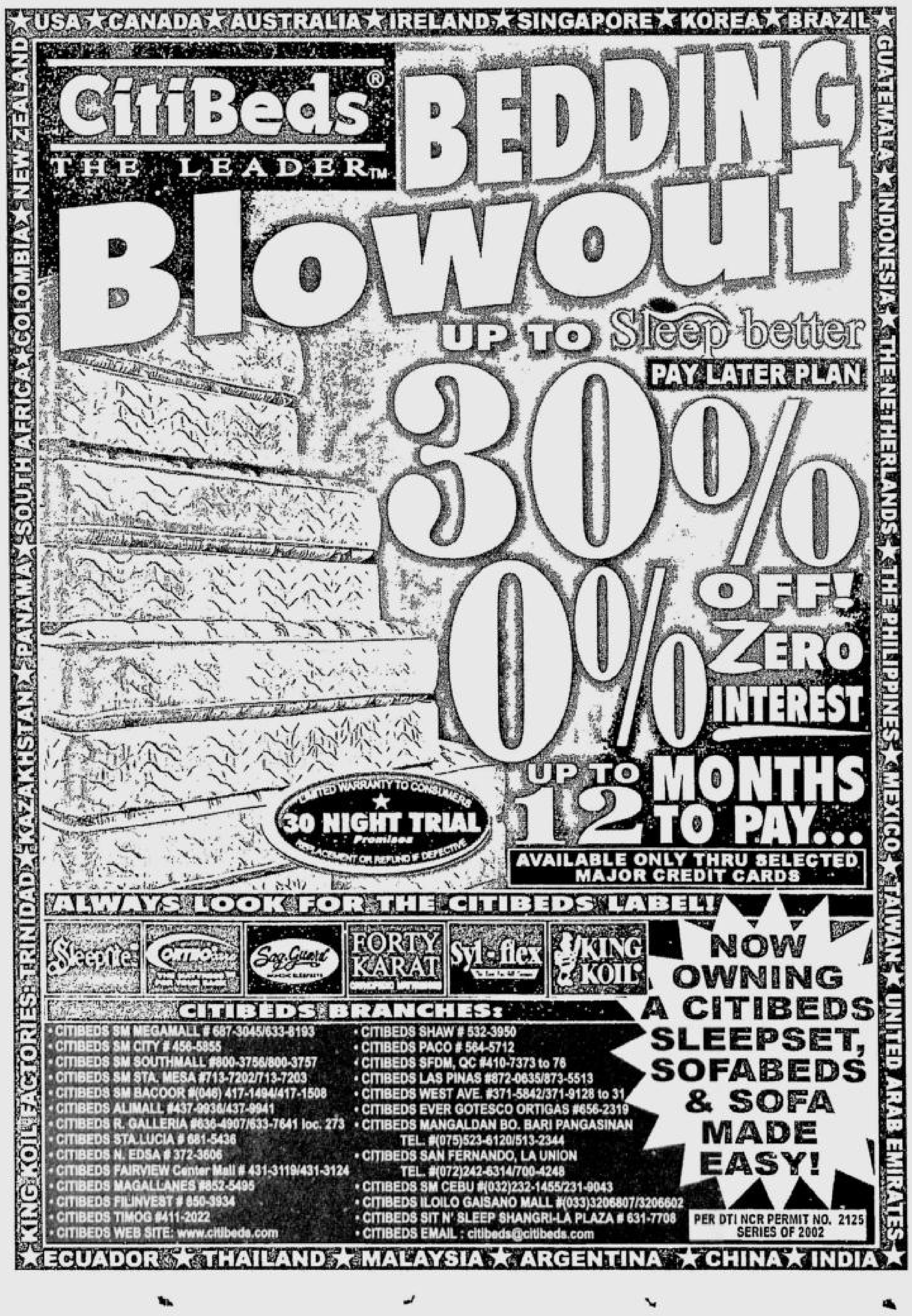
"Clearly in the case of the NPLs, the rules of the game have to be spelled out so there are no misunderstandings... in terms of what are taxable, what are not, what are subject to fees, what are subject to transfer taxes and all that," Buenaventura said.

The Makati Business Club said yesterday the $1-billion fund Lehman Brothers would set up should help unclog bottlenecks in the local lending system.

"We view this as positive news. We see opportunities in terms of buying up debt papers and mortgages, and these AMCs should unclog financial bottlenecks in the housing finance and credit markets," MBC executive director Guillermo Luz told the INQUIRER.

Luz said the business community was "watching very closely how the AMC bills are coming along."

One thorny issue is pricing. Local banks have been unwilling to unload their non-performing assets because of the huge discounts that international banks like Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and Goldman Sachs are demanding. ***With an AFP report***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Erap to undergo new eye checkup

ON THE SAME day his plunder trial resumes, jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada will again be escorted to his Makati-based eye doctor for checkups following his cataract surgery last December.

The Sandiganbayan's 3rd Division yesterday granted Estrada's Dec. 21, motion to undergo further post-operative examinations on Jan. 7 and 14 at the Asian Eye Institute in the upscale Rockwell commercial center.

The court, in effect, junked state prosecutors' opposition to Estrada's request.

The opposition had questioned why doctors can't just examine their VIP patient right at his detention center, the presidential suite of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

Estrada's Jan. 7 checkup, the fourth since his operation on Dec. 16, will coincide with his plunder trial's first hearing of the year, with the court and all the protagonists in the case fresh from a Christmas break.

And it looks like the 64-year-old ousted leader will have more trips to the AEI than to the court in the next couple of months.

According to a manifestation filed by his defense lawyers yesterday, Dr. Amadeo Veloso, his AEI ophthalmologist, had already "advised (us) that the accused might have to undergo another operation on his right eye, this time in February 2002."

As early as November last year, the 3rd Division granted the waiver of appearance filed by Estrada, co-accused son Jinggoy and lawyer Edward Serapio, meaning they would no longer be required to appear every hearing unless ordered so on specific trial dates.

In a phone interview yesterday, Veloso said Estrada's right eye had also developed a cataract that is to be removed in the planned operation.

The AEI, though, has yet to set a specific day in February for the procedure, he said.

On the court-approved checkups, Veloso explained that he and other AEI specialists could not just examine Estrada right at his detention site due to "lack of equipment" at the state-run VMMC.

DOJ hits Chinese meddling

By M. Ubac

JUSTICE Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday slammed the Chinese Embassy in Manila for unduly interfering in the case of two Chinese suspects in the abduction of a Chinese woman in San Fernando City in September last year.

Perez said the two suspected kidnappers—Zhang Du and Zhang Xiwang—had fled to China after they were allowed to post bail by a local court.

"It's not for the (Chinese) embassy to decide on the innocence or guilt of the kidnappers," said Perez, who also heads the National Anti-Crime Commission (NACC) in a concurrent capacity.

Plan to impose levy on generator sets hit

THE GOVERNMENT plans to charge a universal levy on owners of electric generators like schools, hotels, hospitals, restaurants, tourist resorts, newspapers, radio and TV stations, office and high-rise residential buildings, farm irrigation systems and other users.

This levy, which will be charged on every kilowatt hour of power generated, was not well studied, is punitive and may be unconstitutional, according to former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Enrile said the planned universal levy on self-generators of electricity is part of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) submitted by the Department of Energy to the Joint Congressional Power Commission (JCPC) for approval under the Omnibus Power Act, the law that deregulated the power industry.

He said only power generators for household use are exempted.

This universal levy is currently estimated at 40 to 50 centavos per kilowatt hour, Enrile said.

Enrile said it is not fair that self-generators of electric power, who were forced to invest in generating equipment because of the failure of electric power supply firms to provide reliable service, are charged universal levies.

The levy is intended to help in for the recovery of stranded costs of the National Power Corp. and other power distribution utilities.

"It is apparent that these are not well-thought out rules. Generating one's own power is an inalienable right in the first place. Putting an additional levy on self-generators of electricity will increase the power costs of many businesses and industries which violates the letter and spirit of the power deregulation law. We are supposed to reduce our electric rates which are among the highest in Asia," Enrile said.

He said the authors of these proposed rules may have followed blindly the "non-by-passable" doctrine of universal levies and stranded cost recovery which were borrowed from deregulation models of other countries like the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and the United States.

Palace not opposing Kirin deal

THE GOVERNMENT will not oppose Kirin Brewery in the Japanese firm's attempt to buy a 15-percent stake in local food and beverage giant San Miguel, a presidential spokesperson said Thursday.

The firms last month announced Kirin would buy the stake, worth about $535 million, subject to a special stockholders' meeting in February. The deal would entitle the Japanese firm to two San Miguel board seats.

While the Kirin deal has been approved by San Miguel's board, Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo earlier expressed concerns about diluting the government's stake in the company.

The government controls 27 percent of San Miguel shares, which were acquired by using funds from levies imposed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos on coconut farmers in the 1970s.

Press reports have also quoted Marcelo as saying the deal "does not guarantee" it would benefit all existing shareholders of San Miguel and should be reviewed.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao, however, on Thursday said members of the state watchdog, the Presidential Commission on Good Government, as well as President Macapagal-Arroyo's top financial and legal advisers had met to discuss the Kirin proposal.

But while a definite position is yet to be approved, Tiglao said the government's initial stance is that the deal should be allowed to push through.

"The consensus of the Cabinet and of course the President (is that) we cannot conceivably oppose such an investment," Tiglao said.

Definitely the decision has been made not to oppose it, but the nature of the feature of Kirin's entry, some of the details, would have to be worked out," he added.

Tiglao said the presidential Palace would have a final position on the terms of the takeover before Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi arrives in Manila on Jan. 9 for the first leg of his Southeast Asian trip.

He added the government did not see "any major block to the entry of Kirin" by Feb. 27, when stockholders of the firm meet to ratify the deal. *AFP*

Gov't starts takeover of Cocobank

THE GOVERNMENT is expected to wrest control of the 15-member board of the United Coconut Planters Bank this week and would name banker Edward Go as the new chair and chief executive officer of the country's ninth largest lender.

Informed sources said Go, who was earlier asked to chair Philippine National Bank, had opted to head UCPB, a bank whose 95 percent shares were sequestered by the government.

Go's appointment together with the 14 other members of the board would be announced by Malacañang within the week, according to a well-placed government source.

Go was the former president of Asian Banking Corp. and only last month was named as the new chair of PNB to replace Norberto Nazareno, president of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. once the government signs an agreement on the rehabilitation of PNB with Lucio Tan.

Go will replace Geronimo Kilayco, an appointee of ousted President Joseph Estrada. It was believed that Kilayco was chosen by San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, an associate of Estrada.

Sources said the 14 other members of the board had not been finalized but most of those who were appointed early last year may still be named in the slate if they are still available.

Pimentel seeks reopening of Cayetano probe

BY ROCKY NAZARENO

THE SENATE minority will compel the Senate ethics committee chair, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, to reconsider the committee report that cleared Sen. Rene Cayetano of any wrongdoing in the BW insider-trading scandal.

In a press conference, Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel branded the report as "not only unfair to the opposition but also to Cayetano himself" because it now prevents the Taguig-Pateros solon from testifying to clear his name.

"If the majority is not willing to put Cayetano on the (witness) stand, then there is a cover-up," Pimentel said.

Partido ng Masang Pilipino spokesperson Jesus Crispin Remulla and Philippine Movement Against Poverty official Ronald Lumbao had earlier filed a complaint with the committee that Cayetano used his position as a senator to acquire a substantial block of BW shares at a discount.

The Senate ethics committee held four hearings to look into the complicity of Cayetano in the stocks scandal and came up with a committee report on Dec. 23.

The report cleared Cayetano of any wrongdoing on the grounds of "insufficiency of evidence."

But Pimentel wants the investigation reopened.

"We could not have raised some issues earlier because we had to wait for the testimony of (stock broker Raul) De Castro," Pimentel said.

He also said the minority could no longer locate BW chair Dante Tan that only leaves Cayetano as only one who could refute the allegations made by Remulla and Lumbao.

Pimentel, likewise, said Pangilinan erred in disposing of the need to hear the testimony of broadcaster Jay Sonza who had interviewed Tan on how Cayetano was able to acquire the BW shares.

"How do they know that Sonza's testimony is hearsay when he has not testified?" he asked.

Pimentel also questioned the timing of the filing of the ethics committee report on Cayetano.

"The report was filed on a Saturday, Dec. 23, and at 5:05 p.m. at that. Pangilinan is guilty of indecent haste," he said.

Lawyer in hot water; Marcelo may have left

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA

NOW, it is the lawyer of businessman Pacifico Marcelo who could be facing charges after he failed again yesterday to produce his client before the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation yesterday to explain citizenship issues.

Amid reports that Marcelo may have left the country, BID chief Andrea Domingo said she is considering the filing of criminal charges against lawyer Victor dela Serna for "harboring and concealing" an illegal alien.

An irked Domingo also chided Dela Serna for his "arrogant and discourteous behavior" during his visit to the BID office yesterday morning.

She said that instead of presenting his client and submitting documents to disprove Marcelo's US citizenship, Dela Serna demanded that the arrest order against Marcelo be recalled immediately.

She said Dela Serna even had the audacity to give her "one last chance" to recall the arrest order or Marcelo's camp would take action.

Citing Section 46 of the Philippine Immigration Act, Domingo said a person who willfully harbors and conceals an illegal alien could face 10 years imprisonment and a fine of P10,000.

The BID has issued an arrest order against Marcelo, who accused President Macapagal-Arroyo before the Senate of demanding majority stake in his telecommunications firm. But Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said Marcelo left the country during the holidays.

Senate power shift seen

A SHIFT in power in the Senate looms after Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday revealed that "at least two disenchanted administration senators" are ready to bolt the majority that will tip the balance in favor of the opposition.

However, Pimentel refused to identify the senators who will change loyalties, saying that "only time will tell (when they will leave the majority."

"But hopefully as soon as possible," Pimentel said during a press conference. A shift in allegiance by two administration senators will tilt the balance in favor of the opposition at 13-11.

Pimentel himself is expected to vacate his post as Senate minority leader and will relinquish this to Sen. Edgardo Angara when Congress resumes its regular session on Jan. 14 in a term-sharing agreement reached last July.

"I had wanted to let go of the position because it's time-consuming," Pimentel said.

But in a press statement, Angara urged Pimentel to stay on as minority leader.

"He has served the cause of the Senate minority with dedication and excellence and there is no reason why he should step down," Angara said.

In a term-sharing agreement reached last July, Pimentel was to assume the post of minority leader up to December with Angara taking over in January.

A similar agreement was reached by the majority with Senate President Franklin Drilon keeping his post for the first year and a half of the 12th Congress with Sen. Rene Cayetano taking over for the remainder of the term.

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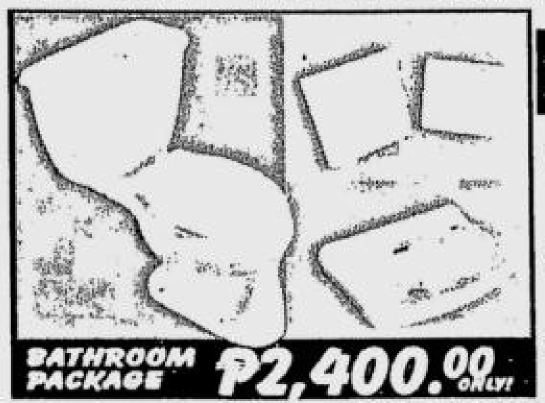

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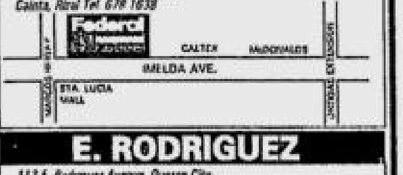

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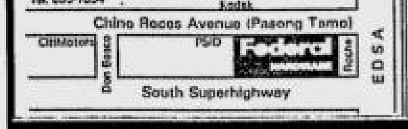

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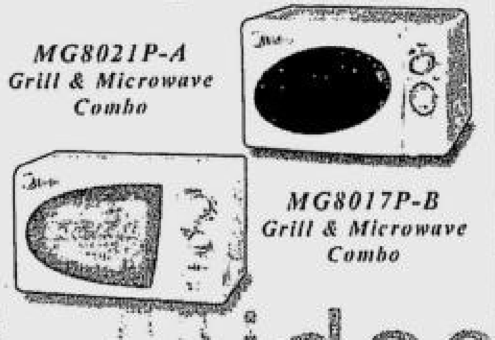
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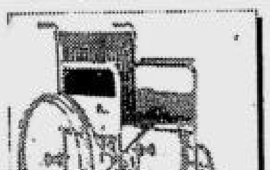

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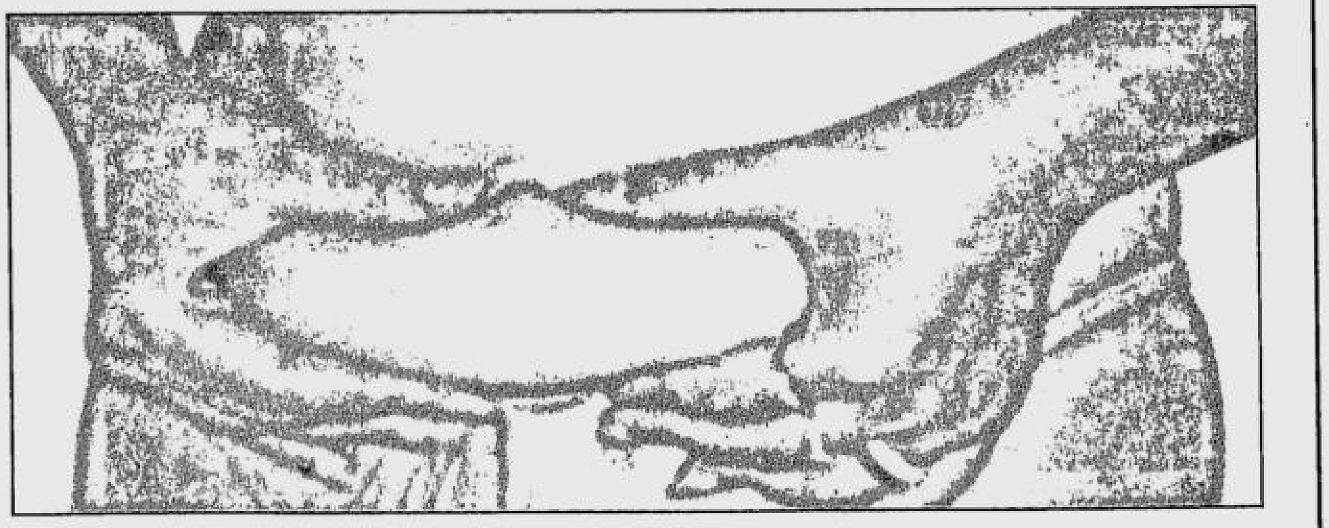

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Joker scores censorship at Palace, slams Sanchez

(From page A1)

information of the public."

Sanchez "wants robotism in government," the senator said, adding that he was beginning to wonder whether "Malacañang is starting a managed or controlled press."

Teodoro Casiño, secretary general of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, described Sanchez as the President's "deodorant."

"We admire the solicitor general for standing his ground and doing his job in telling the truth as it is," Casiño said. "As the state's lead lawyer, he only said that the (SMC-Kirin) deal smells fishy and may harm the public interest. What's wrong with that?"

Casiño also said Bayan and other cause-oriented groups were ready to support Marcelo in challenging the deal that the President had earlier described as a "shot in the arm" of the Philippine economy.

Marcelo had told the INQUIRER that the deal, which would allow Kirin to buy 15 percent of unissued SMC shares for $540 million, would dilute the share of coconut farmers from 27 percent to 24 percent.

He said the deal would give Kirin and the group of SMC chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco "effective control" of the food and beverage conglomerate.

Under the deal, Kirin would have a five-year lock-up period in which it would vote with the Cojuangco group in SMC.

Sanchez had said that Marcelo's statements were "not quite in line with the President's policy." He said the conflict "could have been avoided" had Marcelo first coordinated with him.

In reaction, Arroyo said: "The idea of clearing any statement to the media with Malacañang before it can be released smacks of prior censorship."

Good for whom?

Arroyo, who, along with Marcelo, was part of the prosecution during the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada, pointed out that the SMC-Kirin deal was "imbued with public interest."

"It cannot be glossed over by simply saying that it is a good business deal. Good for whom? This is (what) the public is entitled to know," the senator said.

He added: "Assuming that it is a good business deal because Kirin is paying a 25-percent premium and foreign exchange will flow into the country, is it good governance in light of Executive Orders 1, 2 and 14?"

Arroyo also said Marcelo worked within the bounds of the law in scrutinizing the deal and making his analysis public.

Sanchez, whose position is "neither in the Administrative Code nor created by stature," went out of bounds in trying to muzzle Marcelo who holds "one of the exalted positions in government," the senator said.

"Imagine," Arroyo said, "he is being asked to clear his statements with a press coordinator?"

Sanchez is a former representative of Rizal who was once accused of dual citizenship.

Under Memorandum Order 49 dated Dec. 13, the President directed him to "coordinate" all government press releases and advertisements "to make sure that the government speaks with one voice."

Like a deodorant

But Bayan's Casiño said "this new office under Manuel Sanchez is acting like a deodorant of scandalous transactions such as the Kirin deal."

"The whole affair of funneling information and predetermining what is newsworthy or not insults the intelligence of competent public officials, the media and the public," he said. "The public does not need a deodorant for the endless series of scandals besetting the government."

Casiño said Sanchez should instead focus on "explaining whatever programs the President has in store for the public, and not be a hindrance to the exposition and prosecution of scandals that continue to characterize governance" under the year-old Macapagal presidency.

Echoing Arroyo's views, Gerry Albert-Corpuz, information officer of the militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya, said the establishment of the information "clearinghouse" led by Sanchez violated the public right to information.

"That's censorship of the highest order,"

JOKER ARROYO

Corpuz said. "The issue of the coconut levy funds is in the national interest of the Filipino people. But the administration wants to stifle any national debate on the issue in a vain attempt to accommodate the coconut gang of Mr. Cojuangco."

Corpuz also said Sanchez was not speaking for the Filipino coconut farmers "but for the (Macapagal) clique and Danding's camp, who all want to strike an out-of-court pact for the P130-billion coconut levy fund."

Nothing wrong

Pamalakaya chair Rodolfo Sambajon likewise sees "nothing wrong" in Marcelo's statements.

"Why should he be prosecuted for telling the truth, for being straightforward and aboveboard?" Sambajon said, and called on Marcelo to continue opposing the SMC-Kirin deal.

Danilo Ramos, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), said Marcelo was only being forthright on the issue and assailed the "open attempt to muzzle the Solicitor General in voicing the truth."

Ramos also urged the solicitor general's office to file appropriate criminal and civil charges against Cojuangco.

The KMP is calling for the immediate pullout of the coconut levy fund shares from SMC and the United Coconut Planters Bank, and the return of the funds directly to small coconut farmers.

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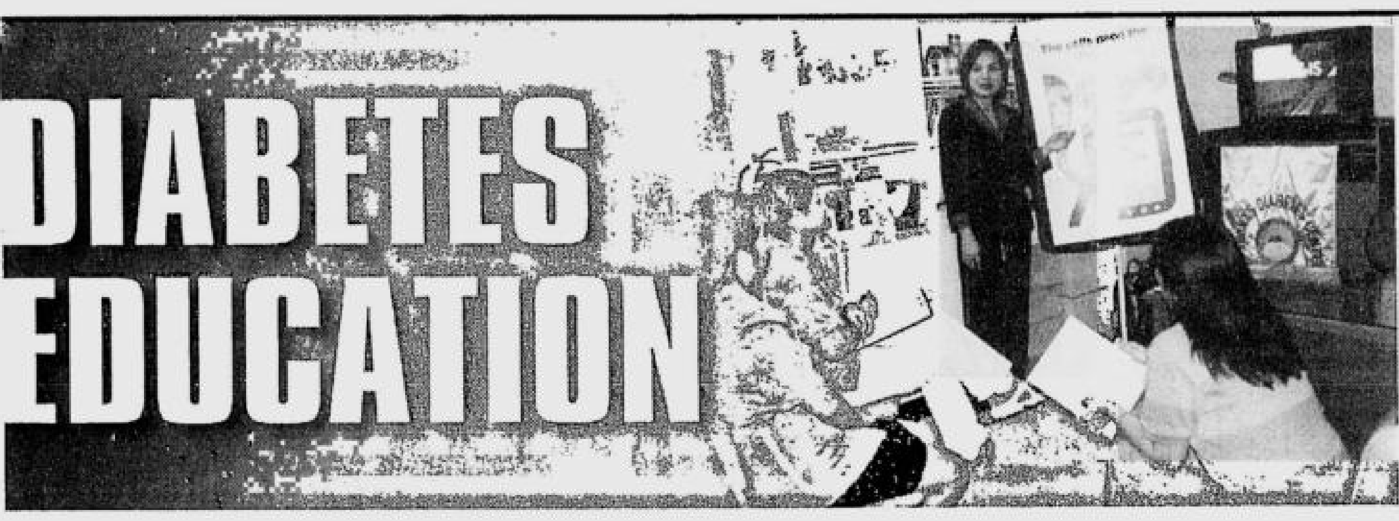

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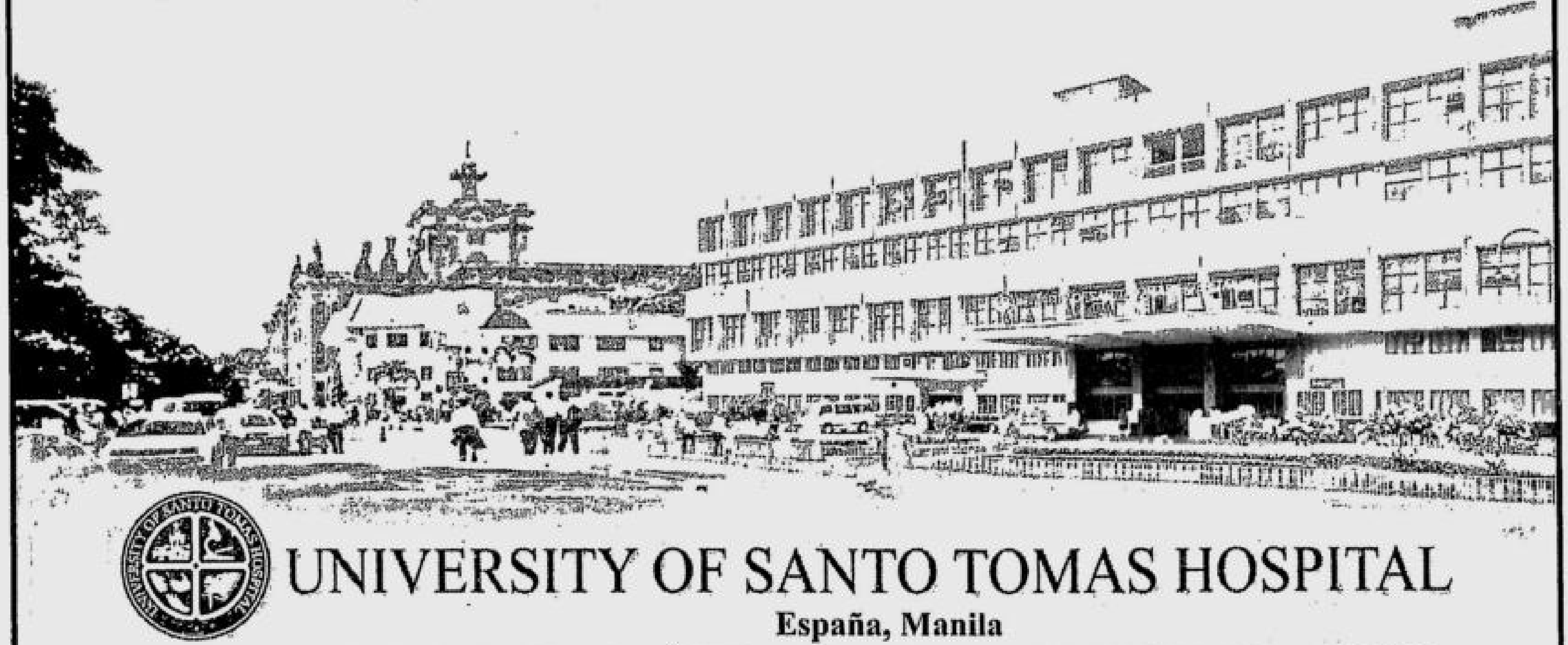

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MISUARI'S first wife, Roaida, with lawyer for the renegade Muslim leader, Elly Pamatong, make a plea to Malaysian PM Mahathir not to send Misuari back here where he faces rebellion charges.
REUTERS

AFP says more US advisers coming to RP

(From page A1)

Rigoberto Tiglao said Manila and Washington had agreed to step up cooperation on counter-terrorism.

Tiglao said Philippine military and defense officials had drawn up a plan with the US Pacific Command for greater cooperation in fighting the Abu Sayyaf.

"The President will make a decision on the plan next week," he said.

Tiglao said Ms Macapagal was seeking the "complete and total annihilation of the criminal terrorist Abu Sayyaf group" by the end of March.

Both Manila and Washington have linked the Abu Sayyaf bandits to the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama Bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

The bandits are holding hostage US Christian missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham of Wichita, Kansas, and Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap in the jungles of Basilan.

Tiglao said the US advisers were expected to teach Filipino officers how specific operations should be undertaken.

"For instance, how a terrain should be approached, how troops should be deployed. It's because they have the experience in anti-terrorist campaigns, especially in Afghanistan," he said.

Tiglao said the "heightened level of assistance and cooperation" between Manila and Washington would be undertaken within the framework of the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty, Visiting Forces Agreement and US Security Council Resolution No. 1368 that was adopted last year to combat international terrorism.

"We emphasize, though, that the plan does not involve the deployment of American combat troops but only of US military and anti-terrorist consultants under the strict supervision of AFP officers," Tiglao said.

Adan said the US military advisers would "work and cooperate under a Filipino commander" based at the Southern Command headquarters in Zamboanga City.

Several US Army communications experts have already arrived to set up a communications center at the Southcom headquarters.

US military advisers last year trained the first batch of Filipino counter-terrorism units now operating with some 5,000 other soldiers in Basilan.

Adan also said the AFP was expecting the arrival of at least eight UH-1H "Huey" helicopters from the United States which would be equipped with night flying equipment.

This would be "a dramatic increase in terms of capability" of the AFP that currently does not have any helicopters that can fly at night.

The military is also hoping to get 30,000 M-16 rifles and almost a hundred motor vehicles as part of military assistance package, according to Adan.

Still in Basilan

In Zamboanga City, the Southcom deputy chief yesterday said the Burnhams were still in the custody of Basilan-based bandit leaders Abu Sabaya and Khadaffy Janjalani contrary to speculations the American couple had been brought to nearby Sulu.

Col. Francisco Gudani said it was impossible for the Abu Sayyaf to have passed the hostages to another group because of the heavy presence of soldiers and policemen in Basilan.

"They could not do that without passing through our troops. So the rumors are false," Gudani said.

He said there was no truth either to speculations that the United States was set to take over the rescue operations following the pullout of at least two Marine battalions from Basilan.

Gudani said that the two Marine battalions had been deployed in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

At least three Marine battalions and nine Army battalions remain in Basilan.

With reports from Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and AFP

Isafp looking for 'bigger' names

(From page A1)

current chief of the elite Special Warfare Group (SWAG).

"That is now being investigated—the responsibility of each, why it happened," Adan said when asked if Sarmiento was being investigated. "So far, we have yet to receive the latest findings. These are just speculations (on) his responsibility. That is why investigators talked to him, and he cooperated."

Miraflor was arrested at the SWAG headquarters in Sangley Point, Cavite, after lawmen seized 100 blocks of C-4 explosives and detonation devices from one of his men.

He is the former head of the Special Reaction Unit, a SWAG commando unit that was attached to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force during the Estrada administration.

The cache of explosives is sufficiently potent to flatten all major military service headquarters in Metro Manila and five big buildings in Makati City.

Tiglao said some of the explosives might have been used in previous destabilization activities against the Macapagal administration. But he did not cite specific examples.

He conceded that certain quarters in the opposition had the capability to destabilize the government, although he discounted the possibility of a coup attempt by the military.

"Some of them are capable, that's why Isafp is on the alert," he said. "They have found these C-4 explosives which may have been used for destabilization."

Capturing power

Tiglao stressed that a coup was different from destabilization.

"A coup involves the capture of power by a segment in the military," he said. "Destabilization may involve bombings and explosions meant only to weaken the government and strengthen the anti-democratic section of the opposition."

Tiglao said the AFP was solidly behind the Constitution and would thwart any move to overthrow the government.

"More importantly, the country will not accept a coup," he said. "The military knows that this will be the worst situation that we will ever encounter at this time."

Agence France Presse quoted Adan as ruling out any prospect of a coup attempt from within military ranks.

"There is no brewing sentiment to create trouble, to destabilize," Adan said in a television interview. "Our officers are now more professional."

He minimized fears that certain sectors might be plotting trouble following the New Year's Eve murder of Baron Cervantes, the self-proclaimed spokesperson of the Young Officers Union (YOU).

In a special address aired Tuesday night, Ms Macapagal condemned the murder and assailed certain unnamed groups whom she described as "new termites" trying to overthrow her administration and derail the country's economic recovery.

The YOU, along with the then Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), was involved in coup attempts against then President Corazon Aquino in the late 1980s. But its members obtained amnesty as part of a peace accord forged with the administration of Aquino's successor, Fidel Ramos.

Adan said a coup attempt was unlikely because "the officers and men of the (AFP) are now more aware of their responsibilities, our dedication to the Constitution, the duly constituted authorities."

He said some officers might oppose the government "but they are not significant in number."

"They might have political views but it does not mean that they, as a force, can generate some sentiment or create some trouble," he said.

Adan also said most of the former coup plotters who were still critical of the government were already out of military service.

"The YOU has lost its former strength," he said, adding that there were no longer any issues that could make the military turn against the government.

Administrative only

At the press briefing, Adan continued to downplay reports linking Lieutenant Miraflor to any coup plot.

"This investigation is administrative in nature," Adan said.

Miraflor has been "confined to quarters" pending the results of the investigation—a point that Sen. Gregorio Honasan is not taking lightly.

Honasan said he had filed a resolution seeking a Senate investigation on Miraflor's "arbitrary detention" to determine whether the officer's human rights were being violated by his continued confinement despite the absence of charges against him.

"We must assume that Miraflor is professional and efficient," Honasan, a stalwart of RAM, said yesterday at a press conference.

He also wondered why only Miraflor was being detained. "What should be asked is, should this be blamed on the chain of command?" he said.

According to Honasan, Miraflor is being singled out "just because he was assigned to the PAOCTF that was then under (opposition) Sen. Panfilo Lacson."

"This is reminiscent of the tactics right after (President Ferdinand) Marcos left," he said, adding that during the Aquino administration, members of the Presidential Security Command were "dispersed to far-flung areas" as punishment for serving the late dictator.

Honasan said this kind of tactic was being employed by the Macapagal administration, and was "forcing AFP leaders to take sides."

"The enemy is out there. The enemy is not Miraflor," the senator said.

He said that before Miraflor could be detained, "all the facts should be gathered, and let the facts speak for themselves."

"After that, charge him or even court-martial him," Honasan said. ***With reports from Martin P. Marfil, Rocky Nazareno and AFP***

Philanderers, lying pols, beware

(From page A1)

ing untruths as they trip off the liar's tongue.

High-definition thermal imaging cameras detect minute changes in temperature in the skin around the eyes, the British science weekly Nature reported. This area literally blushes when someone tells a lie, but the change can be invisible to the observer.

The lie-detecting cameras would be quite attractive for wives who want to find out if their husbands are having an affair and for a skeptical electorate who wants to know if a politician is telling the truth, no matter how unlikely.

But the scientists who developed the sensors believe they could be of better use in airports and border crossings to spot would-be plane hijackers, bombers and terrorists.

Researchers led by James Levine of the Mayo Clinic's Endocrine Research Unit in Minnesota asked eight volunteers to commit a fake crime in which they stabbed a dummy and robbed it of $20 and then asserted their innocence.

Twelve other volunteers did not carry out the mock deed, but underwent the same questioning about the crime.

Using the special cameras, Levine correctly spotted six out of the eight "guilty" volunteers and identified 11 out of the 12 "innocent" ones.

Even better than polygraph

Traditional polygraph tests, carried out on the same guinea pigs by experts from the US Department of Defense Polygraph Institute, likewise spotted six out of the eight "guilty" volunteers.

But they correctly identified only eight out of the 12 "innocent" ones.

Levine says the technique could be godsend for crowded places such as airports, where security has to be thorough but time is short.

"This technique has an accuracy comparable to that of polygraph examination by experts and has potential for application in remote and rapid security screening, without the need for skilled staff or physical contact," his team writes.

Other scientists wary

But other scientists questioned the significance of the findings, noting that the technique was tested on a small number of people. They also said the experiment fell far short of what was needed to reveal whether thermal imaging could work accurately and quickly in real-life situations.

"What they found is interesting, but it's more than a bit of a stretch for them to say this could be useful for mass screening," said Monroe Friedman, a professor of psychology at Eastern Michigan University.

Frank Horvath, a professor of criminal justice at Michigan State University, said the thermal imaging camera, like a polygraph, is only picking up physiological changes caused by anxiety. Such changes do not necessarily indicate guilt or innocence, he said.

And even if thermal imaging is comparable in accuracy to polygraphs, Horvath said it would not be suitable for rapid mass screenings. He noted that 25 percent of the test subjects who were lying eluded detection.

Polygraph vs thermal imaging

Polygraphs have long been considered to increase security at airports but the technology, which links tiny changes in heart and breathing rates to blood pressure and sweating, takes too long to process, making it impractical for large numbers of people.

Thermal imaging, on the other hand, could be used by an untrained counter clerk or security guard to see whether a passenger is lying if, for example, he denies that he packed his suitcase himself or insists he is not carrying a weapon.

Warmer areas of skin around the eyes show up on the monitoring screen in red, orange and yellow, depending on the temperature.

The researchers say the idea came from a previous discovery that when someone hears a startling noise, the blood rushes to the skin around the eyes providing a specific facial "thermal signature."

The blushing is believed to be triggered by the sympathetic nervous system in the fight-or-flight response that is part of man's inherited capacity for survival.

Levine's theory is that the same response is triggered by lying, as covering up is another survival mechanism. *AFP, AP, Reuters*

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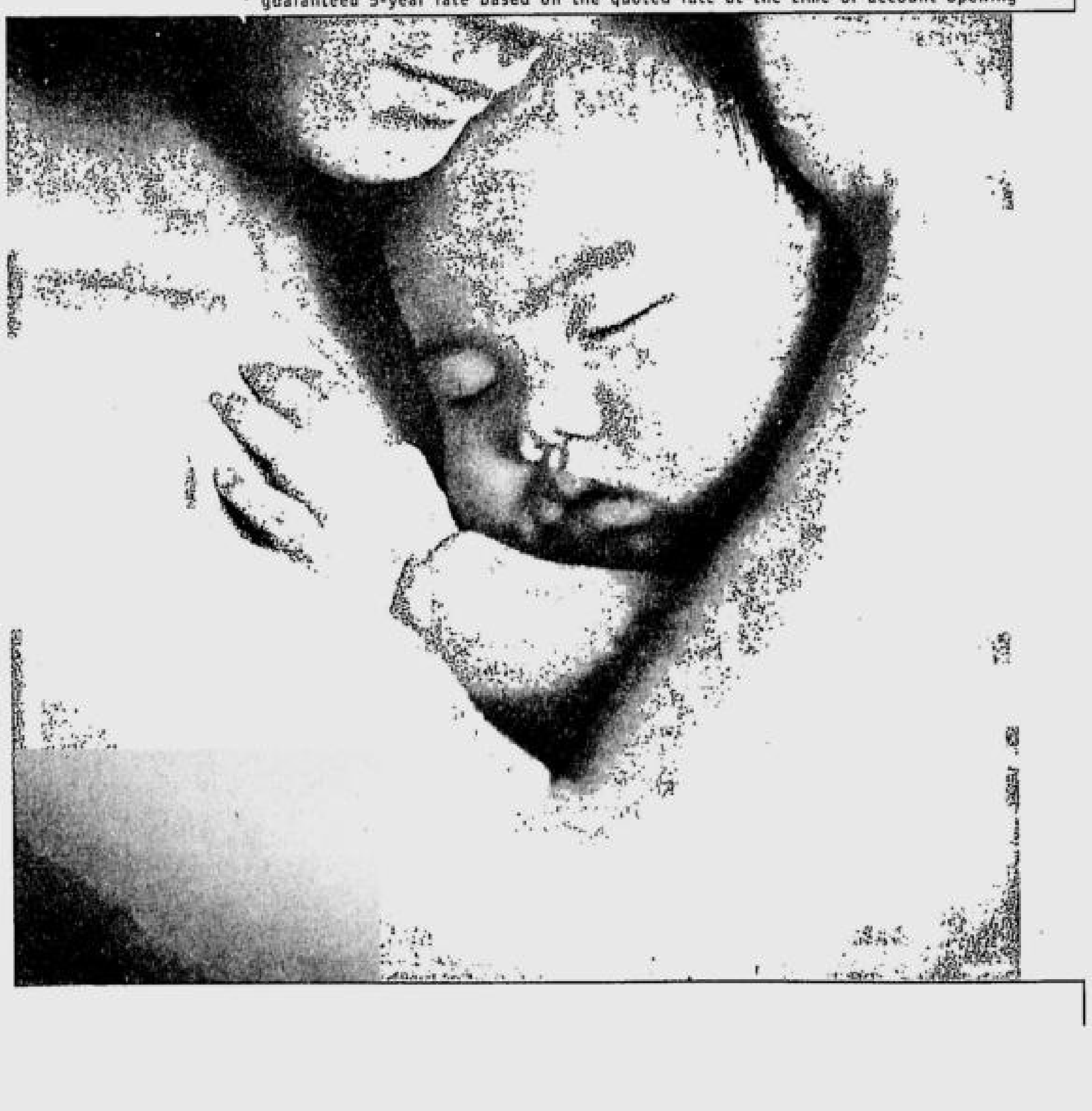

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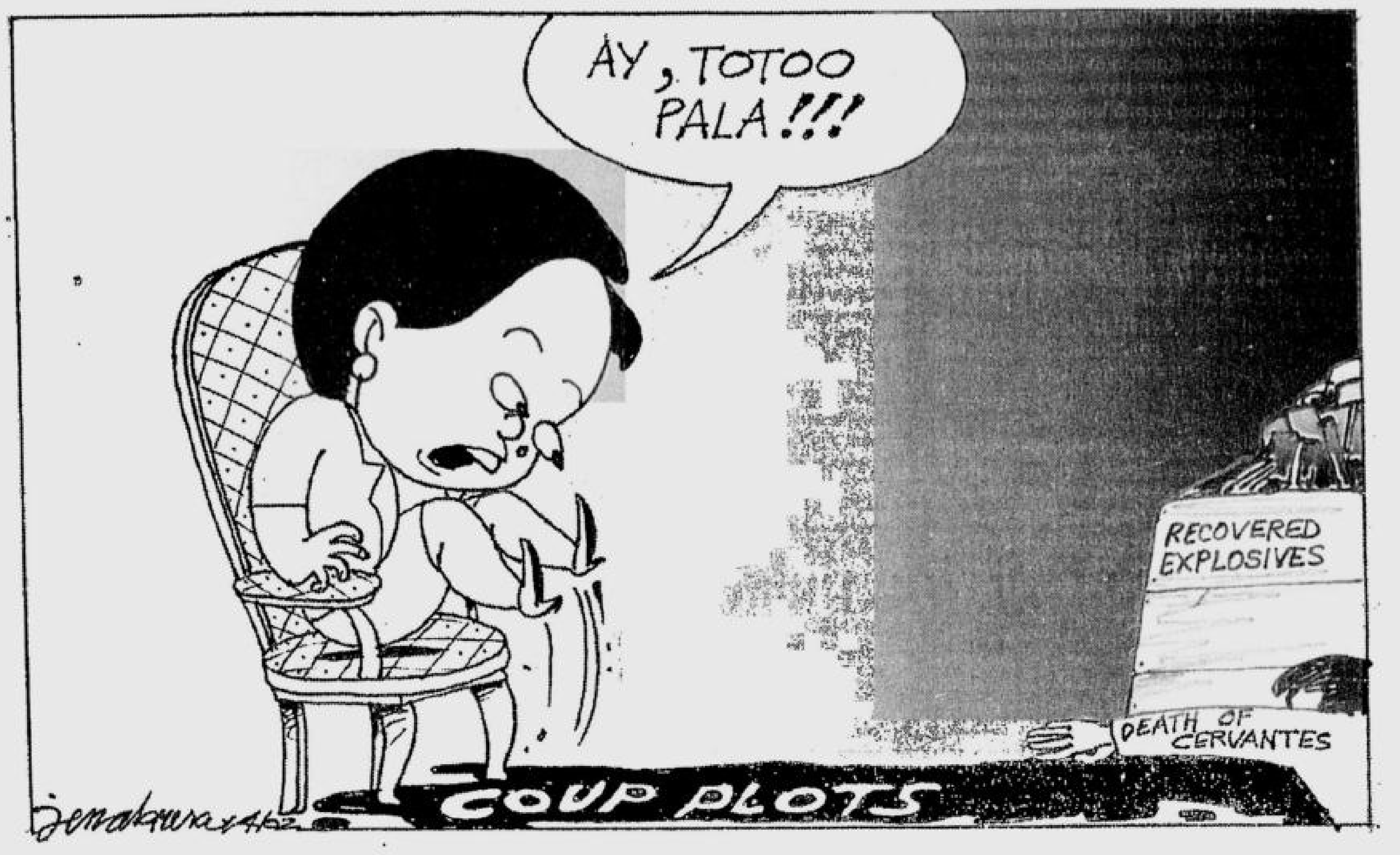

EDITORIALS

Plots

IT'S like one of those whodunit mysteries where the murderer could have been anybody.

Baron Alexander Cervantes lived so clandestine a life not even his parents knew he was married. Such levels of secrecy have produced conflicting profiles about his person. One of them is that he was a devious operator, who lived his life in shadowy corners, hatching all sorts of intrigues and conspiracies. His dossier, made by the intelligence community, suggests so. "Subject," it says, "is a liar and a great impersonator. He should never be trusted. His ploy in the world of media and politics is an indication that he seeks fame and position with financial benefits."

What is known of Cervantes' last few years seems to fit the description. He moved in and out of the corridors of power, being in the right place at the right time. At least until he went to the corner of Times Street and Alabang-Zapote Road shortly before New Year's Eve, and found himself at the very wrong place at the very wrong time. Before that, he wove in and out of the highest echelons of power, managing to get positions and appointments that confounded his contemporaries. That by itself is an invitation to mayhem. The notion that you cannot walk through the corridors of power without finding a dozen daggers stuck in your back is not always metaphorical.

The other profile says he was an idealist, who was disaffected with government and wanted to lead a campaign against it. He had apparently been in touch with various opposition and civil society groups, sounding them out for that purpose. As one source told the INQUIRER: "Baron was very pissed off with the administration. He felt that government had failed to fulfill its promises to the people. He badly wanted reform." Of course the source told the INQUIRER that at Cervantes' wake, an occasion that gathers the kin and friends of the dead and that is dedicated to eulogies.

We will probably never know what Cervantes was really all about. We do know something more practical, however, which was that he was also the boy who cried wolf. Specifically, he was the guy who claimed to know of secret meetings between members of the RAM-YOU presumably with destabilization of the government as their agenda. Hours before he was murdered, he had just gone to the house of Pastor Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs to deliver the names of the alleged RAM-YOU plotters against the government.

If we recall right, the boy who cried wolf was also a liar, and a great prankster, if not a great impersonator. But one who saw a real wolf in the end, except that no one would believe him.

Often, the most obvious is true. The levels of enmity between Cervantes and his colleagues at the RAM-YOU certainly were very high. Murderously high? We do not know. But less than 24 hours after they publicly disowned him as their spokesperson, or even as a member, he was dead. Coincidence? Maybe. His fellows would be fools to do him in when they are bound to be the most likely suspects? Maybe. But stranger things have happened, and this is the Philippines. It is a line eminently worth investigating.

Conspiracies

WHO to investigate this?

The normal course is to leave the matter to the police or the military or both. Murder is a police matter and destabilization plots by military organizations are a military matter. But the normal course is not always the best course for this country.

The PNP certainly does not inspire much confidence in this respect. If the Nida Blanca case is any gauge of the crime-solving abilities of the PNP and NBI, we may have to wait for a long, long time for this case to be closed. Maybe forever. And contrary to rumor, the military is not the best institution to investigate military adventurism, or plain hooliganism. Its record of punishing mutineers with 20 pushups before eventually restoring their station in life within the AFP is next to legendary.

A Senate hearing is probably more in order. One that focuses on military shenanigans, which have been cropping up plentifully of late. Before Cervantes was murdered, another officer, Navy Lt. Donn Anthony Miraflor, had been accused by Victor Cor-pus of hiding a cache of explosives, probably with destabilization in mind. And before that, of course, there was the charge, corroborated by Sen. Serge Osmeña, that some military officers were profiting from the Abu Sayyaf's kid-napping operations.

It's time we scrutinized more closely the conduct of the military, an institution that has pretty much done as it pleased over the years. The anniversary of Edsa II should prove an especially auspicious time for it.

What makes a successful TV commercial?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THERE are many persons who think up and make those television commercials that flood the TV sets, but very few of these commercials stick in the minds of viewers. The rest fail because they use the "hard sell," they try to sell their products directly. The successful ones sell theirs indirectly; afterwards, you hardly notice what they're trying to sell but they stick in the mind.

The most outstanding classics I can think of are the Marlboro and Philip Morris cigarette commercials. The Marlboro ad you can recognize even when you're in the bathroom or rummaging in the refrigerator because of its distinctive theme music taken from the Western movie "The Magnificent Seven." (That movie, by the way, the westernized version of Akira Kurosawa's classic "The Seven Samurai," launched the careers of several actors who became movie stars: Yul Brynner, Charles Bronson, Steve McQueen, James Coburn and Robert Vaughn. Another adaptation from an even more well known Kurosawa classic, "Rashomon," transformed by Hollywood to "The Outrage," was not so successful. But "The Magnificent Seven" was so successful, it had two sequels with different casts.) The beautiful images are of course the nature of the American West: horses, deer, water, the vast countryside achingly beautiful in autumn or winter, homecoming at Christmas, and always the hardy, weather-beaten cowboy who smokes Marlboro cigarettes. The commercial doesn't tell you to smoke Marlboro, it just shows the Marlboro Man enjoying it.

The Philip Morris commercial is a series of visual jokes about the difficulties of smoking long cigarettes. You never tire watching them, and in fact look forward to seeing a new commercial with a new gag. Too bad they're no longer being shown here.

The two most successful TV commercials made here are the "Hello Billy" series of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., and the McDonald's ad about Karen and her *lolo* (although the latter, I think, was made by an American director for an American ad agency).

The "Hello Billy" series is about the romance of Billy and Gracia in the United States, revealed through overseas phone conversations with his *pakialamera* mother here, and the couple's eventual homecoming and marriage. A complication was introduced in the person of a gay friend who's in love with Billy but the gay community was incensed by it and so that part was discontinued. Now the makers are obviously toying with the idea of a romance between Billy's widowed mother and Gracia's widower-father themselves.

The McDonald's commercial is about Karen and her senile grandfather who keeps calling her Gina. She keeps correcting him and was beginning to get irritated until the *lolo* cuts his hamburger sandwich into two, wrap one-half in wax paper and says that it is for his favorite granddaughter, Karen. It is noteworthy that not once was McDonald's mentioned nor its logo flashed during the commercial. That's what I call "soft sell."

The commercial is so successful that good-natured jokes and parodies have sprouted. (And I think it deserves a sequel.) One on television's "Ispoop" has the *lolo* mistaking Nora Aunor for Vilma Santos, a mortal sin among their respective fans.

This joke with slightly different names, is making the rounds through text messages:

Lolo: "*Saan ka ba galing* Karen?"
Girl: "*Lo,* Dina *po.*"
Lolo: "*Kasi, matagal na tayong di nagkikita,* Karen."
Girl: "Dina *po.*"
Lolo: *Ah,* Dina. *Este* Dina, *virgin ka pa ba*?"
Girl: "Karen *po.*"

* * *

And here is a proposed funny sequel:

After several years, the *lolo* dies and a lawyer calls Karen that her *lolo* has left her an inheritance. He invites here to the reading of his will.

On the day of the opening of the will, *lolo's* relatives are there, including Karen.

The family house is left to Gina, the farm in the province to Dina, the car and the piano to other *apos*.

At last, the will comes to Karen. Her inheritance is a big box in the safe. The box is taken out of the safe and opened.

Inside, wrapped in wax paper, is the moldy half of a McDonald's hamburger sandwich.

* * *

Malacañang called me up the other day to comment on this column of New Year's Day about First Gentleman Mike Arroyo wanting to resume his radio and television shows. The column advised that he better drop the idea as he has neither the voice nor the personality to be a host of a radio and TV talk show.

The Palace official said the First Gentleman has had enough and really does not want to resume the talk shows nor be in the public eye. The statement of the presidential spokesperson, he said, was not exactly accurate.

What happened was that during a dinner, the manager of a radio station told them that many indigents were calling the station and asking why Mr. Arroyo no longer has a program during which he doles out charity to the poor. They replied that they would relay the message to Mr. Arroyo. His reaction, he said, was negative. No more shows.

Good decision. He can still perform charity work without being in the limelight, irritating people and inviting more concocted scandals.

Reason

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MANNY Molina, who identifies himself as the president of the Peaceful, Responsible, Owners of Guns, says the recent spate of individuals and groups demanding to own guns shows it is a felt need, and a perfectly legitimate one. He can't understand, he says, why the media arraign it bitterly.

What's so wrong with the folks of Lamitan, Basilan, asking to arm themselves against the Abu Sayyaf? They have the right to defend themselves. The Department of Interior and Local Government is already recruiting civilian agents to help fight crime, how can adding more to them make it wrong? Julio Logarta's proposal for barangay officials to tap licensed gun owners to serve as an auxiliary force should make gun owners more useful, by bringing their skills to the streets and not just the firing range. Government has the right to allow citizens, particularly minorities, to defend themselves when faced with "annihilation," so the ethnic minorities in Davao Oriental have every right to petition their governor to give them shotguns. And Catholic priests themselves are already armed, or are buying guns for protection against robbers and bandits, so how can their call for that to be legitimized be scoffed at?

You have gunpowder for brains, you truly will not see what is so wrong with all this.

You go to Muslim Mindanao, and the first thing you'll realize is how the proliferation of guns there has caused lawlessness to escalate, if not spawned it in the first place. Guns are not neutral "tools" ("they're only as good or bad as the person using them"), they create a culture—a culture of violence. Even before kids there know their ABCs, they already know the different makes of guns. I've talked to a 12-year-old whose family was the victim of a massacre. He knew what kinds of weapons the soldiers used to kill his family. He could **hear** the weapons being fired, he said, from where he hid. The one thing he himself wanted to own in this life was a gun, so he could avenge his family's death, and so he could grow up being respected—or feared (there wasn't much difference between the two concepts)—by the community.

Which brings us to the crux of the problem: Who will protect us from the people who propose to protect themselves from lawlessness? Lest we forget, the Abu Sayyaf came from the loins of groups who armed themselves as protection against the people who they said meant them harm, chiefly the Christian "land-grabbers." The NPA armed themselves as protection against a martial law government determined to foist its tyrannical will through the barrel of a gun. We do know from history, or specifically from Cory Aquino's time, what happens when you arm civilians to resist "lawlessness." You produce the headhunting Alsa Masa, vigilante groups and fanatical cults.

The DILG is already recruiting civilian agents? Well, that is the reason we have the scale of lawlessness we do. Recruiting more civilian agents won't make the kidnappings in Chinatown stop, it will make them rise. All that means is that we'll be having more "assets" like Ador Mawanay and Philip Medel, who are assets only to the asses who control them. They are clearly liabilities to the rest of us whom they prey upon. There is a reason why the anti-gun people want law enforcers to be uniformed at all times, or to be easily identifiable to the citizens. Which is that you will not normally find covert operatives in the streets hounding criminals, you will find them in karaoke bars terrorizing paying customers.

As to licensed gun owners better applying their skills to people who shoot back rather than targets that don't, that is the most stupid idea of all. The anti-gun people are **not** saying people may not own guns—that, not quite incidentally, is the grossest misrepresentation of all. What they are saying is that gun owners may not bring their guns outside of their homes. There is good reason for that. Outside the home, guns are more likely to be used for aggression than defense. The picture that may occur in Molina's mind while looking at a private citizen walking around the streets of Metro Manila with a gun tucked under his belt may be that of a peaceful and responsible gun owner. The image that looms in the minds of most of us is that of Robert de Niro muttering "You talkin' to me?" in front of a mirror and blasting his imaginary transgressor with a cannon.

The notion that licensed gun owners are naturally responsible and may be allowed to carry guns at all times owes to two monumental fallacies. The first is that they are capable of acting rationally at all times, or at least that they are impervious to bursts of rage. Chief of them road rage, or, what seems more common in these parts, to "karaoke rage." That is not a rational assumption in this country.

The second is even more fallacious, which is the assumption that licensed gun owners are capable of acting rationally **most** of the time. The notion that licensed gun owners go through the eye of the needle to obtain a license to own guns is vapid. All you need to own a gun is money—to pay for the gun and to pay off the licensor. The notion of a community of peaceful, responsible, gun owners presupposes a larger community that has the institutions to assure it—foremost of them incorruptible licensing bureaus. You see the fallacy of that in the fact that most cops themselves are not fit to carry guns—and **they** are supposed to pass through the most rigorous tests to do so. You bring in private citizens to help fight crime, and heaven help us. This will be the Wild, Wild East, if it isn't so already.

Molina says anti-gun sentiments and LSD have something in common, which is that they addle the brain. Well, it is a testament to how far in the past he is living that he thinks LSD and not *shabu* (or more recently, ecstasy) is the current brain-addler. But quite apart from that, there is one thing that has been found to addle the brain more efficiently than any substance. That is unbridled power.

Power corrupts, and guns corrupt absolutely.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

A twist to tradition

COMMENTARY

Sylvia L. Mayuga

We, the Filipino majority, have become historical bearers of the myth of a Divine Child born of a paradoxical parentage of poverty and heavenly peace

IN NO other season has it been sharper than now—when the festival of lights called Christmas once again illumined the darkest time of year, inching toward the sky-high explosion of hope and frustration in the pyrotechnics of New Year's Eve à la Pinoy.

No cause for wonder at its casualties for it is now when light and dark in the heavens are matched by human hunger and fullness locked in mortal combat.

Nor has there been need for depth astrology to know and move intuitively to its rhythm—through the noise, fumes, rats in growing mounds of garbage, traffic and wall-to-wall crowds—in the attempt to win some joy for the children in our lives amid the growing armies of street children.

More than ever, heavenly fortitude has been required to see the celebration to its last delighted chuckle and contented belch. Even Nick Joaquin must be paraphrased by the pandemonium of our time: "Only in struggle for custom and ceremony can innocence and beauty these days be born."

Fulcrum to the celebration is the return to rest awhile in a sense of home. Having been baptized Roman Catholic before we had any say in the matter, we, the Filipino majority, have become historical bearers of the myth of a Divine Child born of a paradoxical parentage of poverty and heavenly peace, permeating both our sense of home and Christmas.

In this Child's name, all over the globe, distances and the exigencies of the great Filipino diaspora are yearly overcome to gather 'round belen and parol to hymn Christmas in a time when families were complete under one roof, not scattered by lack of opportunity on home ground.

Sharing that basic script with Filipinos everywhere, there came a sudden twist to tradition in our own divided family. Our house in Tambo, Parañaque came an inch to being razed by a raging fire fanned by high December winds that blazed on Quirino Avenue 12 days before Christmas. Friends and neighbors lost their homes across the street. We counted our blessings in loss confined to a brownout from burned Meralco poles, landlines downed by a PLDT switch box turned into twisted metal, and the street-side leaves of two 50-year-old caimito trees toasted to a crisp.

Back to basics like never before, we sweltered and shared tepid water and store-bought food with evacuee neighbors on the first two evenings, stumbling around with candles and flashlights, sharing cell phones blinking "low batt" at the most inopportune moments. And yet, the smell of burned wood and metal still in the air on the first morning after the fire, we watched the new homeless dismantling what remained of their homes for sale to waiting scrap dealers, for the price of the day's ration of rice. The following morning, the intrepid were already rebuilding small shanties with whatever scraps remained while others looked for other places to rent or moved to their families in the province. Life had not missed a beat, defying the burned tinsel and light bulbs of a kidnapped Christmas.

A new rhythm began to set in our home when it became clear that Meralco and PLDT employees were too busy holidaying to pay us a mind until "next year." A pre-Christmas birthday bash with an electronic band for the young lady of the house was cancelled, the gifts wrapped by candlelight, greeting cards dispatched in place of phone calls and e-mail, a capella carols substituted for a hi-tech sound system run on too many batteries quickly drained by a curious 3-year-old's fingers on the buttons.

On our now dark island afloat in a sea of blinking lights, Christmas had to become a new martial art if the grand reunion on Christmas Day was to take place at all. And so the twist to sacred ritual gradually yielded what became the season's best gift—the need to wake to the sun and sleep to moon and stars. For many mornings now, we have begun beating even dawn to the draw, welcoming the first sunburst with perfect brewed coffee, alive to the need of moving in time to the cosmos itself, for the children's sake.

Christmas Eve and Day were flawless, with the bonus of two mornings of waking to the golden blue moon of New Year. Not partridges on a pear tree but a phoenix on a red shawl was the best gift of a strange season.

Sylvia L. Mayuga is a veteran freelance writer on historical and cultural issues.

My heroic quest

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHEN our firstborn made his appearance, we were daft enough, and crazy enough about "The Fellowship of the Ring," to give him the nickname "Frodo." No amount of explaining, however, could convince the other members of the family that this was a name meant to be borne with pride and dignity. Instead, when our infant son bawled, relatives would call out: "*Rina, umiiyak si…ano!* (Rina, what's-his-name is crying!)" My mother even complained that "Frodo" sounded like a dog's name. Of course, it was no use telling her the difference between "Fido" and the heroic Hobbit. In time, not wanting to let our boy grow up being referred to as "what's-his-name," or "whatchamacallhim," we bowed to our family's demand to change his nickname. Problem was, having set our heart on "Frodo," we couldn't think of any other name. It was Mama, as usual, who decreed that the son of Pie should be called "Pie-pie," a name he has tried to discard since he could tell the difference between cutesy and pathetic.

While growing up, though, he has been comforted (and thrilled) by the thought that he bears a "secret name." And now that "The Lord of the Rings," the first of this trilogy of hefty volumes and hot films, is on everybody's lips, he's begun to boast about this name that no one could quite get themselves to call him by.

And by the way, when our daughter was born, we toyed with baptizing her "Galadriel." But, having learnt our lesson, we passed on it, convinced it was too much trouble to educate relatives on yet another Tolkien character. We've kept the Tolkien fever within our little circle since.

* * *

OR so we thought. Our impression that we were among the elect, keepers of the flame at the altar of Tolkien, guardians of Middle Earth and all its creatures, was dispelled as soon as news made the rounds that a film version of the trilogy was being readied. We had trooped to theaters when Ralph Bakshi's dark, muddy and muddled animated version was shown, and came home nearly heartbroken. The filmmakers' decision to make three movies instead of trying to cram the epic into three hours' worth of confusion boded well for our renewed hopes, and the positive buzz from insiders and audiences in the United States, where "Lord of the Rings" opened before Christmas, has only whet our appetite. Indeed, the children and the hubby have been nagging me to check my pigeonhole in the office for invitations to a premiere. When I just couldn't find the time amid the holiday madness, they vowed to be among the audience on the first day of screening, even if it meant camping out before the box office.

"Lord of the Rings" is set to open in theaters around the city today, but no, we haven't gathered our sleeping bags yet. As I write this, there are ads in the papers announcing special late-night "sneak previews" of "Lord of the Rings" in selected theaters. When I called him at work to tell him the news, the hubby, who's usually snoring in bed by 9 p.m. tops, jumped at the suggestion, to my surprise. At once, we made plans for the midnight screening. And thereby hangs a tale.

* * *

"BE among the first to watch!" burbled the Ayala Cinemas blurb. The ad announced a 12 midnight screening "tonight!" at both Glorietta 4 and Alabang Town Center. Wanting to secure seats at what I anticipated would be a mob scene, I tried reserving seats through www.sureseats.com as their ads suggested. When I logged in, though, I found this terse message that the site was "being upgraded," and asking for my understanding. Okay.

Then I called the "24-hour link to all Ayala cinemas," which turned out to be an automated voice announcing the movie offerings. But when I punched the button for "special events," and then the one for "midnight screenings," the disembodied voice said "there is no midnight screening scheduled for tonight." I dialed the number three or four more times, just to make sure (that's how crazy this movie has made me), and got the same announcement. So, what gives?

I got so incensed I logged back onto "myayala.com" just to give feedback about their lousy service. I checked with my e-mail box after a few hours, but have yet to receive a reply.

* * *

GIVING up on "G-4," I decided to try my luck at Robinsons Movieworld, which also had an ad for a special screening of "The Lord of the Rings" at the Galleria, Ermita and Metro East.

After a few tries, I got a live, human voice (finally!) but when I asked about the special screening, he (it was a male voice) was candid enough to say that they still didn't have all the details, and would get back to me. I gave him my number but after four hours or so, I still have to hear from him. One question: If they still aren't sure about the details of these special screenings (there's supposed to be another one at the Megamall cinemas), why the hell put out ads and make us jump through the hoops? Who do I sue for a wasted morning?

"The Fellowship of the Ring," if you still don't know, tells the story of a courageous band of Hobbits, humans, an elf, a dwarf and other creatures, including the wizard Gandalf, who dare venture into the dark land of Mordor to destroy a ring that would give its owner, the evil Lord Sauron, power over all of creation.

If you read the books closely, you'll see echoes of it in such films as the "Star Wars" installments. "The Fellowship of the Ring" stands unmatched as a piece of wholly imagined quest literature. But if I don't get my reserved seats soon, I could yet do Tolkien one better.

Clues to history from stale economic data

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

EXCAVATED artifacts that dominate the exhibits at the National Museum always leave me cold and disappointed. Why should I feel this way when everything is wonderfully displayed in the museum? What do rooms of Oriental ceramics have to do with me? My students, forced to visit the museum, have stronger feelings and swear never to look at another piece of blue and white pottery for the rest of their lives. While these plates and bowls are proof of pre-colonial trade between the Philippines and China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, etc. I'm sure these artifacts have a story to tell. Despite all the recent advances in Philippine archaeology, our pre-history remains unwritten. We have pieces in the puzzle but not the complete picture. I demand too much of our overworked archaeologists, its an occupational bias, I want the artifacts to tell me a story.

Recent excavations of underwater sites by the National Museum has added a new dimension to our story because the porcelain usually found in pre-colonial graves are now found in shipwrecked galleons and junks. Most of the material recovered, naturally, has been porcelain because it was one of the main exports to the Philippines. Furthermore, unlike food or paper, porcelain survives centuries of immersion in seawater. Often overgrown with coral or other aquatic growth, porcelain is very sturdy. These plates, bowls and tea cups came to mind again when I was browsing over the two-volume "Les Philippines" published by Jean Mallat in Paris in 1846. My original intent was to dig up material on New Year in Manila seen from the eyes of a 19th-century Frenchman, but I was drawn to the economic data. Normally, I would ignore these old figures, stale to a businessman today, but since then these have become clues for a historian and archaeologist.

For example, Mallat listed down the contents of a Chinese junk from Macao that unloaded merchandise in Manila in the 1830s. The junk carried—you guessed it—porcelain: 330 dishes of blue porcelain, 250 kinds of varnished pottery, 600 small green earthenware plates, 12,832 large white porcelain plates, 81 different shapes of plates, 3,420 assortments of black jars of different kinds, 51,661 blue crockery plates, 220 small soup dishes of bluish porcelain, etc. All these were trivial to me until I realized that the junk was loaded with goods traded into the Philippines for a millennium before Mallat. I did not know, or even imagine, that we used to have a brisk trade with Macao in the Spanish period. In recent years, our only references to Macao are the term *lutong macaw* (warped in the Marcos period in *lutong Macoy*!) and that jumbo floating restaurant and casino that used to be moored along the CCP complex on Roxas Boulevard.

While most foreign trade with the Philippines was limited by the Spaniards to the ports of Zamboanga and Manila, export and import to Macao were open to other Philippine ports. Mallat says the Philippine trade with Macao was contained in about 25 ships a year or at least two ships a month. The Philippines basically exported rice, but there were other items like: *zibi* (dried shrimp), *salinganes* nests (bird's nest?), shark's fin, *nervios de vano* (deer sinews), ebony (kamagong), molave, mother of pearl, *tintoron* (liquid indigo), gold dust, etc. Aside from the porcelain, Mallat records the contents of a junk from Macao.

Food being one of my interests, I noted: 261 covered jars of garlic and salted radish, 8 piculs of *agua mala* (loosely translated means "bad water" whatever that is), 204 gantas of Chinese oil, 1,140 gantas red rice, 2 piculs Chinese *anis*, 20 piculs dried fish, 50 baskets chestnuts (castañas), 490 catis of different kinds of tea (that came with 2,000 small tea cups, 80 copper pots and 137 species of bowls with handles, 60,000 cups of various sizes and shapes), 15 catis licorice juice, 568 hams, 57 stone mills for grinding, 1 caban or 1 sack dried apples, 8 *ternos* (sets or pairs?) mortars, 1,990 catis of small sweet oranges (Mandarin oranges?), 3 cabans of nuts, and 200 piculs *sutanju* (sotanghon). Surely all these edibles were being traded long before Magellan was even born.

The list of food would not be complete without the list of crockery, 50 small wooden spoons, 56 iron spoons, 400 *chareros* of fine earth and 20 small bamboo baskets. There were 11,000 bamboo *sipit* which I think were chopsticks rather than clothespins. What kind of a society ate a lot but imported 100 toothbrushes, 225 shoe brushes and 820 ear picks? Did we care more for ear wax than our teeth? Who ordered the 108 spittoons of green pottery?

There were 3.5 piculs of glass seeds (actually pearls) which are still traded by Muslims in Greenhills, but who wanted 50,000 sewing needles and 1,620 tailor's scissors in Manila in 1840? Magellan brought small bells to trade in 1521 and in the 1830s, long before we talked of *tingaling* and *tiriring* the junk brought: 100 small copper bells, 160 big bells and 1,500 small bells. There were 275 paper and bamboo fans and two fans of cloth but none was made in ivory or tortoise shell. Economic data can tell us what we were like, what we are and perhaps what we can be.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Ruffling thoughts

HIGH BLOOD

Victoria J. Ruiz

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed.**

IT has been some months now, and yet the images of the savage look in those faces—people rampaging toward the seat of government with rocks in hand often thrown in all directions, fed by rock-carrying dump trucks, cursing, looting—continue to haunt me in moments of introspection. That was such an ugly rage, prompting me to ask myself in disbelief: Are these my Filipino *kababayans*?

Summarily labeled as the "revolt of the poor," thoughts go back to a few TV clips of supposedly honorable men and women egging on the people in Edsa (who were unduly taken advantage of) with the end in view of the former trying to regain their slipping power. A big portion of the participants were later found to be positive for drug intake. Mounds of empty bottles of alcoholic drinks were reportedly found at the site of the gathering at the desecrated Edsa Shrine. Reports filtered out of leaders in strategic corners under cover of shadows, towels strung around their necks (Tagalog-movie style), further inciting the mobs to keep going on. Leaders who unobtrusively sneaked away to avoid identification by and confrontation with lawmen. To me, this could not be but a vile form of oppression—supposedly knowledgeable people taking advantage of the disadvantaged.

Thoughts continue to come to mind. Could all these have been so scripted that the initial targets of venom were the media and press people so that this intrepid sector was cajoled, disdained, bodily harmed, with some equipment destroyed so they would eventually be unable to report and record the clockwork round of *hakot*, styrofoam packed meals and thirst quenchers, endless reviling and name-calling—in this extravaganza of what appeared to have been a serial *miting de avance* (hopefully for the organizers) to be later labeled Edsa III?

It would be well to remember that Edsa I and Edsa II were epic examples of non-violent struggles, admired and emulated worldwide, against the ruthless oppression and venalities of national leaders. There were national moral demands to put an end to all these. By and large Filipinos are culturally God-fearing and law-abiding. They may appear to be interminably patient and long suffering—but Filipinos cannot stand being endlessly downtrodden and being made fools of, or robbed of their right to the truth.

That's why one cannot readily accept the May 2001 events being labeled Edsa III. What if, for the endless series of elections that lay ahead, waves of grand *mitings de avance* continue to be held in this consecrated shrine, capitalized by power-driven hopefuls, and suddenly we find ourselves running out of Roman numerals? The matter certainly calls for serious rethinking and placing circumstances and events in their proper perspective.

A sorry outcome of the May 2001 event is the consequent flood of abuse of the word "poor." Politicians thereafter endlessly and craftily invoked the word. It was as if the neglected poor were suddenly discovered—when they had been around all these years and when in truth so many politicians have continuously used the unfortunates to further their selfish ends—especially during elections.

If you are a struggling, law-abiding citizen, try going through the rigors of building a home. You would have to go through what seems to be an infinity of forms, signatures and processes from the lending institutions to city hall permits, land titling, assessors, etc. And yet wonder of wonders, under the very noses and jurisdiction of local authorities, squatter colonies sprout as if by magic in every nook and cranny in such great number that in some cases they outnumber local legitimate residents. During election time, they are visited assiduously by candidates—both local and national—and sadly, after the votes have been cast, these poor, displaced families remain out of the politicians' minds. Except, of course, when photographers are around, and there is the opportunity to show "concern for the poor." They hand out the inevitable plastic bags containing the assortment of noodles and sardines and soap, the bags emblazoned with their names, acronyms and sometimes their faces.

This is wishful thinking but why can't the government earmark sites for the genuine poor? Such sites should have access to potable water, electricity, schools, livelihood centers and transportation. Where local and barangay officials can easily be alerted to avoid the tragedies, horrors, and consequent costs of chaotic demolitions and relocations.

When can politicians ever put public interest above self-aggrandizement and genuinely work for the very people they swear to serve and protect? When will they stop taking undue advantage of the underprivileged, taking from them whatever dignity they have left, treating them as mendicants—new discovered segments of a long-suffering society? When will they be like the selfless, faceless souls and organizations who have for decades genuinely cared for and actually nurtured body and spirit of the poor?

Why, in heaven's name, are our lawmakers now even contemplating the disintegration of our Filipino solidarity and vaunted family values by considering divorce laws for our Christian country? It is a fact that even the Church grants annulments. As if it were that simple. The Church could grant an annulment only after a thorough and excruciating process (ask those who have been through it) when two people are found to have been illegitimately married. Ergo, there was no marriage to begin with. Divorce, on the other hand, seeks to dissolve the bond between two validly married people.

Shouldn't focus be placed instead on education, stressing the need for more adequate preparation for such a serious step as marriage? Or the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage? Will we never learn from the tragic and heart-rending tales and experiences of distraught and confused children of divorced/separated parents, of the travails of single parents, of fathers driven to penury by the need to support a number of families of their own making?

We battle endlessly for the preservation of various forms of wildlife, the environment and everything else around us. How about the preservation of the Filipino family, the basic unit of our society?

These are troubling random thoughts that ruffle the tranquility of one's twilight years.

Victoria J. Ruiz, 73, is a retired secretary of a private firm dealing with insurance.

THEY SAID

New attitudes

"One of the reasons I came from upstairs downstairs was to change the attitudes about competing and winning."

—Basketball superstar Michael Jordan on the recent winnings enjoyed by his Washington Wizards team

Effective House chief

"I have already declared early on that I am not aspiring for a higher office anymore. I have no excess agenda and that is probably why I am effective as a Speaker."

—House Speaker Jose de Venecia on not having plans of running for president in 2004

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Is Comelec registration info late again?

I WANT to vote. My age, 18, has given me the legal right to suffrage that every Filipino citizen would want to exercise. However, I'm afraid I would miss my first election.

Failure on the part of the government regarding the dissemination of information is the culprit. The call to registration of first-time voters with the Commission on Elections came to the knowledge of many first-timers too late. I think this will just lead to nothing but low turnout of voters among the youth.

The government must first fulfill its duty to inform the people before the people could comply with their duty to elect the officials who would represent them. This, I think, would guarantee full cooperation from the people and a better interaction between the government and its constituents. And this would also entail a healthier practice of one's rights. After all, I would not want to be a first-time voter in my 20s.—**BRIDGET KE, bridgetnke@hotmail.com**

No compromise reached on coco levy

THE INITIAL S.J. after his name identifies Fr. Nono Alfonso as a Jesuit. But he does not write like a Jesuit. Jesuits are lovers of truth. Before they write on important issues, they do some extensive research and carefully check their facts.

Writing in your newspaper's commentary last Dec. 21 about the coco levy funds, Alfonso erred when he deprecatingly labeled the Oct. 28 meeting which Archbishop Capalla hosted between the PKSMMN and Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. as "an aborted compromise deal." His research work was faulty since he did not consider the truth as stated in the Dec. 2 letter of the archbishop who said that there was no deal, no compromise, no negotiations, but only an initial dialogue to seek ways to reach unity and understanding on the immediate resolution of the coco levy issue—a dialogue whose results would still be submitted to government authorities.

Another hallmark of Jesuits is that they are promoters of peace. When truth is wounded, peace becomes one of its first victims. There is no peace among brothers and sisters in the organizations serving the coconut poor. What was once a united advocacy force has broken up into factions, hurling insults and biased accusations against each other. When a Jesuit enters into this arena, should not his presence promote peace instead of fraternal conflict? Why foster discord by falsely accusing Efren Villaseñor of pressuring coco farmers to accept a compromise deal? Those farmers are no pushovers even if they are poor and uneducated.

Finally, it is a well-kept secret that Jesuits do practice exemplary humility. It is a basic Ignatian value. Alfonso has publicly harmed the reputation of Villaseñor and indirectly made Archbishop Capalla appear like a naïve conspirator in an unethical deal. Alfonso has the opportunity to put into practice Ignatian humility by asking their forgiveness.—**ANTONIO L. LEDESMA, executive director, Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia, P.O. Box 458 Greenhills Post Office, 1502 Metro Manila**

Garchitorena's relief is justifiable

I READ your editorial last Dec. 2, 2001, titled "The weakest link."

I would like to commend the Supreme Court for relieving Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena. This only means that there are no sacred cows in the so-called weakest branch of the government called the judiciary. The Supreme Court means business because of the backlog of cases, especially in the First Division of the Sandiganbayan.

The relief will give Garchitorena ample time writing up the decisions regarding the cases.

I believe in the axiom, "Justice delayed is justice denied." I hope that the Supreme Court's action will give rise to a fast resolution of the cases pending in our courts.

In these hard times, cases should be resolved in the fastest possible time so justice can be served. Cases gathering dust in our courts take a toll on the finances as well as the dependability of our system of justice.—**CHRISTINE MARASIGAN, St. James College of Quezon City, 736 Tandang Sora Ave., Quezon City**

National Steel in Lucio Tan's sights

LUCIO Tan must have been born under a very lucky star.

After pillaging the Philippine Airlines (selling off to himself the profitable operations and sharing with government the lemons) and raiding the Philippine National Bank (don't forget the P25-billion Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas advances), now he is positioning to plunder by proxy whatever is left of the National Steel Corp.

His backroom deals and corporate maneuvers are too transparent and blatant to be ignored.

Meanwhile, the people in Northern Mindanao suffer as Tan holds their economic life hostage to his pillaging and plunder.—**JOHN ALBERT DE CASTRO, Kidapawan City, North Cotabato**

LETTERS

Having enough of John Osmeña

SEN. John Osmeña is a revelation. He was among the "craven eleven" of the impeachment trial. We know his true colors. Now, he is using his being a lawmaker to fight the very institution that protects and defends our people.

If he is really for the people's welfare, he should instead introduce bills that will improve our Armed Forces. What will happen to us in the face of an emergency when our military is ill-equipped? Terrorism plagues us. And with the Abu Sayyaf, Moro National Liberation Front, Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, National Democratic Front and other common criminals ranged against the citizenry, we are defenseless.

We cannot just use handguns and old aircraft to fight the rebels. Is Osmeña out of his mind? I think there is a motive behind his allegations against the military. His accusation serves his own purpose. He tries to appear as a straightforward, honest senator perhaps to wash away the stigma of the past.

But we, the people, know the true character of Osmeña. If he opted to let democracy die before Edsa Dos, he is willing to sacrifice the safety of our people and the whole nation. I cannot help but feel sorry for Osmeña. He doesn't know where he stands. I hope he doesn't run for public office again. He has become a pain in the neck for the Filipino people.—**CHRYSANTINE GOLLA, 600-B J.P. Rizal St., Makati City**

Dual citizenship requires charter amendment

EVEN if the President, the Vice President, the Senate president, the Speaker and other politicians of consequence favor granting dual citizenship to Filipino expatriates and overseas Filipino workers, the fact remains that our Constitution in Section 5, Article 4 clearly says that dual allegiance of citizens is inimical to the national interest and shall be dealt with by law. No amount of fine distinctions can set aside a specific constitutional mandate. Neither will a treaty remedy the situation because all laws and treaties should not contravene our fundamental law.

The Constitution has to be amended by deleting the provision against dual allegiance if we truly and sincerely want millions of Filipino expatriates and OFWs to enjoy dual citizenship. Let us not give our *kababayans* abroad any false hopes and empty promises.

In 1996, Speaker Jose de Venecia sent this writer and then House counsel Gaudencio Mendoza to key US and Canadian cities to find out the concerns of our *kababayans* abroad. The result was a six-inch thick signed petition seeking dual citizenship. Based on the petitions, De Venecia filed a bill granting dual citizenship to Filipinos abroad. Nothing came of it.

If President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is really serious and has her eye on history, she should create a Presidential Commission on Constitutional Reforms that will study needed charter reforms. To be composed of the secretaries-general of major political parties, the Philconsa president and the chairpersons of the House and Senate committees on constitutional reforms, this commission should be required to submit a written report to the President within one year. Its recommendations shall be published in newspapers of general circulation to enlighten the public on issues it will be voting upon in the ensuing referendum. The commission should also recommend whether the amendments shall be discussed and approved by Congress sitting as a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention.

Soon, the President will again visit Canada and the United States. Will she give empty promises and false hopes of dual citizenship to Filipinos abroad? Or will she rise up to the challenge of pursuing constitutional reforms?—**FRUCTUOSO SUZARA, 15 Charleyville, White Plains, Quezon City**

Time to rectify coco fund injustices

WITH THE RECENT ruling of the Supreme Court declaring the coconut levy funds as public in nature, there appears a rainbow of hope for the poor, exploited coconut farmers, even as their betrayal has been exposed.

Too long have the coconut farmers been given the runaround in their clamor to use the coco levy funds to alleviate their plight. Too long have the manipulators been sheltered in comfort by the coco levy funds—the ultimate symbol of the coconut farmers' sweat and tears. Too long have the small farmers in the coconut industry been tolerating this unfair exploitation perpetrated by these manipulators.

Since the Marcos regime, through the Aquino and Ramos administrations until the resignation of Joseph Estrada, Danding Cojuangco has been using the coco levy funds to expand his dominance at the San Miguel Corp. and his personal interests through the help of people in high places.

But it is not too late at this stage of our political history to give what is due the coconut farmers. The Estrada nominees in the SMC board should have the *delicadeza* to resign immediately to give the Macapagal administration a free hand in nominating patriotic and well-meaning persons to the SMC board to represent the coconut farmers. —**RAMON L. BOISER, 148 Batulao Rd., Central Park, Bangkal, Davao City**

Can there be that many child prostitutes?

IT'S heartbreaking to read that there are 250 million children trapped in sex rings, as reported by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) at the Second World Conference Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Japan.

Carol Bellamy, executive director of the Unicef, particularly mentioned the Philippines as having 100,000 child prostitutes. Who provided Bellamy with such an incredible figure? What I know is that Ecpat has been issuing press releases for the past years claiming the same statistics of 100,000 child prostitutes in the Philippines. Is Ecpat the source of Bellamy's "estimate"? I already dared Ecpat to produce the basis of its claim. So far, the dare has still been unanswered.

Are we advertising our children to foreign pedophiles who come to the Philippines as "tourists"?

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon must do something about this.—**T.A. CRUZ, Tondo I, Manila**

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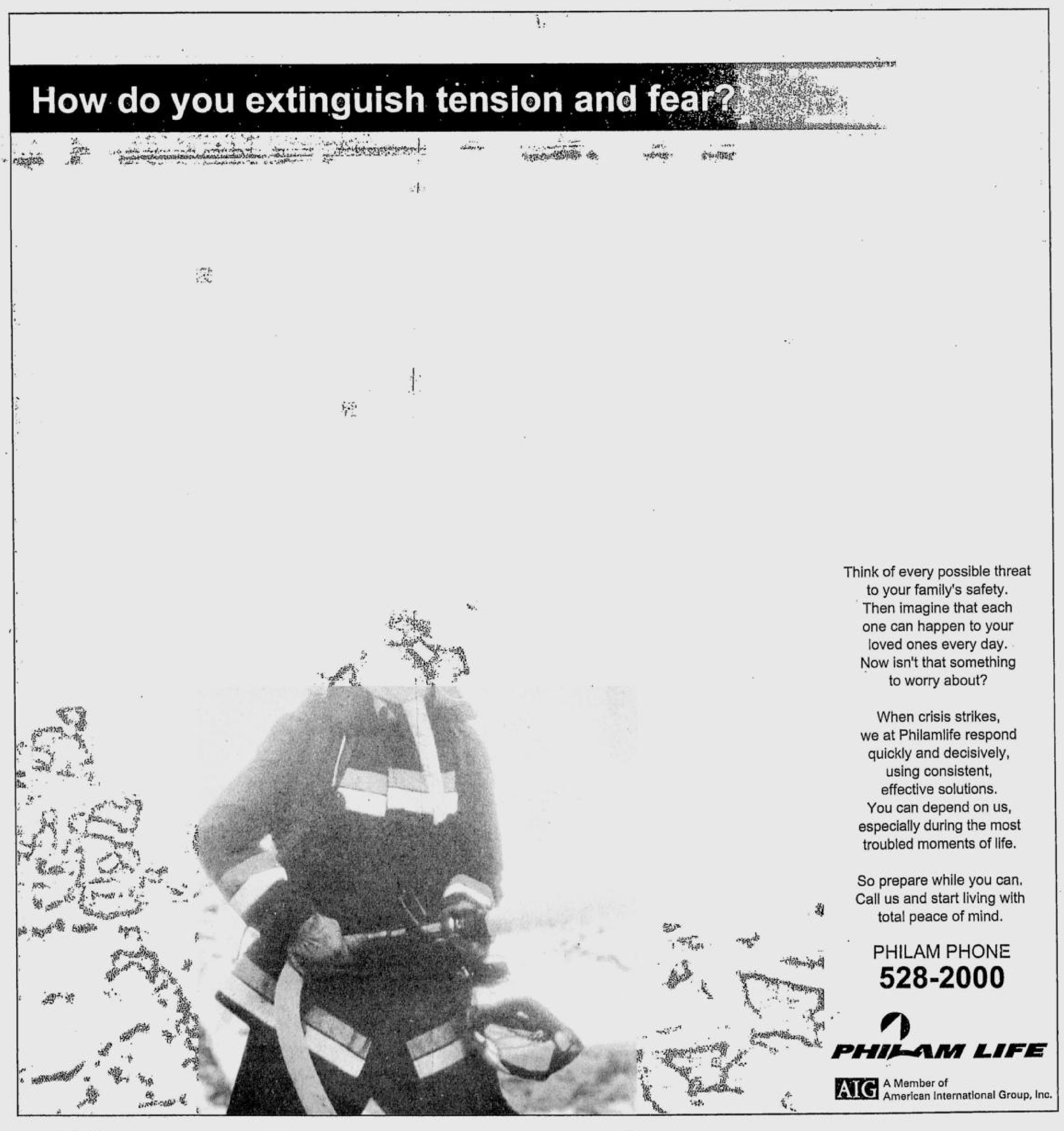
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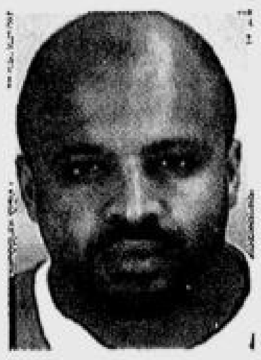
CONSPIRACY TO MURDER THOUSANDS

Sept. 11 suspect enters no plea



MOUSSAOUI

ALEXANDRIA, Virginia—The first man to face trial for the Sept. 11 terrorist onslaught on the United States invoked Allah and refused to enter a plea here Wednesday to conspiracy to murder thousands of Americans.

Federal Judge Leonie Brinkema set an Oct. 14 trial date and entered pleas of not guilty to all charges on behalf of Frenchman Zacarias Moussaoui, accused of conspiring with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network to carry out the Sept. 11 attacks.

"In the name of Allah, I don't have anything to plead. I enter no plea," said the bearded, balding Moussaoui, 33, dressed in a green jumpsuit with the word "prisoner" emblazoned on the back.

"I interpret that as a plea of not guilty," said Brinkema, and Moussaoui's defense team agreed. Declining to plead is legally equivalent to entering a not guilty plea.

The judge then set the October trial date despite protests from Moussaoui's lawyers who said they needed more time to build their defense.

Moussaoui faces six charges, four of which may carry the death penalty on conviction, but prosecutors have until March 29 to decide whether to seek his execution.

The 19 hijackers who died in the Sept. 11 attacks were named as co-conspirators in the indictment.

Those hijackers took control of four commercial aircraft on the morning of Sept. 11, turning them into guided missiles in attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon outside Washington that left more than 3,100 people dead.

The United States blames Bin Laden for the attacks and launched a military campaign in Afghanistan on Oct. 7 after the country's Taliban rulers refused to hand over the Saudi multimillionaire they had been sheltering since 1996.

The Taliban have since been overthrown and Bin Laden remains a fugitive.

Moussaoui is charged with conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism, to commit aircraft piracy, to destroy aircraft, to use weapons of mass destruction, to murder United States employees and to destroy property.

He was indicted on Dec. 11, three months to the day after the hijackers took control of four planes and used them as flying bombs in an elaborate terrorist plot.

Announcing the charges against Moussaoui, US Attorney General John Ashcroft said the defendant was believed to be "an active participant in this conspiracy" to kill thousands of people on Sept. 11.

Investigators believe the Frenchman would have been the 20th hijacker had he evaded arrest on Aug. 16 in Minnesota on immigration charges that led to his indictment as a terrorist suspect. *AFP*

India, Pakistan ministers meet

KATMANDU, Nepal—As the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan shook hands, smiled and chatted on Wednesday, a grenade assault in the border province of Kashmir threatened the chances that diplomatic talks might lessen the warlike tension between the two nuclear neighbors.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh was "in no mood" for a one-on-one meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, Abdul Sattar, an Indian official said on condition of anonymity after the two met other South Asian ministers for economic talks and dinner.

Pakistan's government spokesperson, said, however, "The ice is melting."

"The very fact that both countries agreed to come to the summit is a very positive step," added the spokesperson, Ashfaq Ahmad Gondal.

The summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation being held in Nepal this week was delayed for three years because of a 1999 border conflict between India and Pakistan and a military coup that brought President Gen. Pervez Musharraf to power in Pakistan.

Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee are scheduled to join other leaders in Nepal on Friday, but Vajpayee's government has said there would be no private talks between the two—even during a Saturday retreat at a lodge with a view of the Himalayan Mountains.

Both India and Pakistan are part of US President George Bush's coalition against terrorism and Musharraf has been praised in Washington for reversing his support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Vajpayee, however, has told Bush that Pakistan is the chief sponsor of militant groups who target India. *AP*

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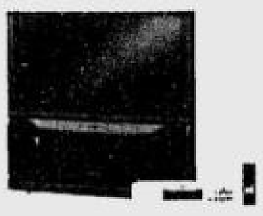

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Taliban spy chief killed

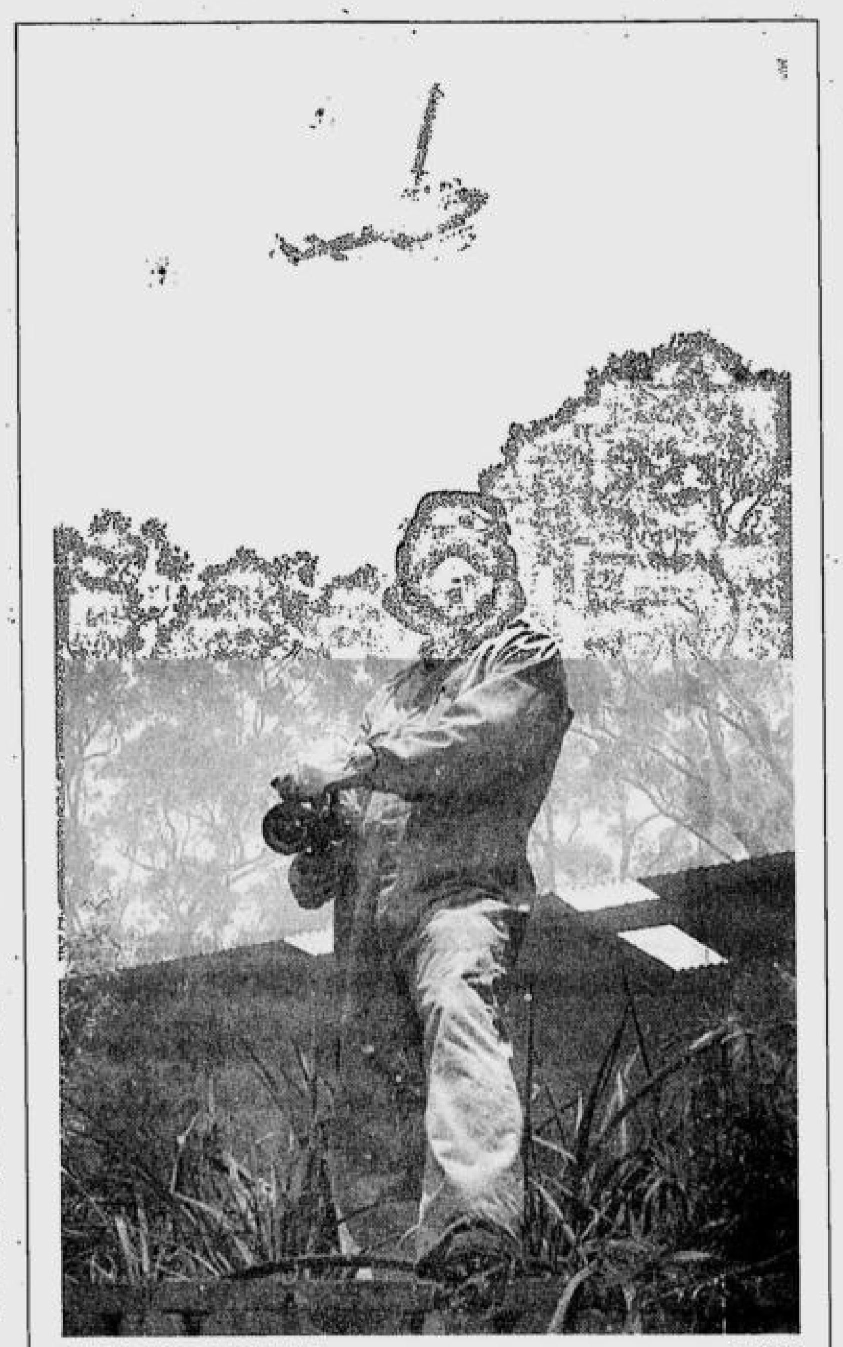
KABUL, Afghanistan—American bombs killed the Taliban's intelligence chief, the new Afghan government confirmed, and a tribal commander reported that negotiations were under way for the surrender of the ousted Taliban supreme leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

In Washington, Pentagon officials said Wednesday that they doubted Omar was seeking to surrender. Some 1,000 to 1,500 Taliban fighters holding out near Baghran are trying to "negotiate themselves out of a predicament," spokesperson Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem told reporters. "But I think it's a leap of faith if we believe that that is on the behalf of Mullah Omar himself."

The United States had identified the intelligence chief, Qari Ahmadullah, as one of the Taliban leaders it was hunting. He was believed to be the highest-ranking Taliban official killed in the American-led campaign in Afghanistan.

Ahmadullah, 40, was killed by US bombings of Naka, in Paktia province, said Abdullah Tawheedi, a deputy intelligence minister for the interim government in Kabul. He was among 25 people killed in Naka on Dec. 27, when US planes attacked a house where he was staying, the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press reported.

According to Raz Mohammed Khan Lunai, Tawheedi's representative in neighboring Ghazni province, Ahmadullah was hit by air strikes while trying to flee on a motorcycle. Lunai said he witnessed Ahmadullah's Dec. 31 burial in a remote and sparsely populated area of Ghazni. *AP*



STILL NO RESPITE REUTERS

A firefighter prepares to battle a bush fire approaching homes as a helicopter hovers above in the Sydney suburb of West Pymble Jan. 2. Worsening weather conditions have once again caused problems for firefighters with more than 100 summer bush fires continuing to burn out of control in Sydney's southern, northern and western suburbs. Some 140 houses and thousands of hectares have been destroyed, but there have been no deaths or serious injuries.

Argentina president plotting devaluation

BUENOS AIRES—Calling for a cross-party government, populist Eduardo Duhalde took office on Wednesday as Argentina's fifth president in two weeks and began plotting a possible devaluation to pull the economy out of a recession that sparked bloody riots.

After Congress chose Duhalde on Tuesday to lead Argentina until 2003, the Peronist Party powerbroker vowed to scrap "an economic model that has brought desperation to a vast majority"—the currency system created by his own party a decade ago.

A Duhalde adviser said that could mean a 30 to 40-percent devaluation of the peso from the one-to-one peg to the dollar, which has turned Argentina into a virtual dollar zone where most home loans and major contracts are in greenbacks.

Devaluation could bankrupt millions since they would need more pesos, in which wages are paid, to cancel dollar debts. But it is also seen as possibly the only way to end a four-year slump which has impoverished a country with the highest incomes in Latin America and pushed up unemployment to 18.3 percent.

"I'm spending my savings while they're still worth something," said Alberto, a lawyer, as he bought a video camera in a department store.

To win support for likely painful measures, Duhalde was close to appointing a "national unity" Cabinet that would include opposition parties. But a Peronist, the respected orthodox economist Jorge Remes Lenicov, is expected to fill the powerful economy ministry post.

Economic instability, plus a freeze on bank savings for the past month which infuriated ordinary Argentines, set off looting and rioting which forced out President Fernando de la Rua—who was due to rule until 2003—and killed 27 people.

Duhalde made no policy comments at a brief ceremony at which he took office. But he told one paper: "Flotation is one of the five alternatives economists have put forth, but even those that defended it are not so convinced." Devaluation would make Argentine exports cheaper and more competitive abroad.

The Buenos Aires Stock Exchange's Merval Index gained 9.58 percent on Wednesday as investors snapped up blue-chip stocks with pesos that may soon buy a lot less. *Reuters*

US envoy to return to Mideast

JERUSALEM—Washington's new Middle East troubleshooter was to return to the region on Thursday to try and rescue Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, only weeks after ending his first visit as violence raged.

Envoy Anthony Zinni aims to bring about a lasting ceasefire, encourage a Palestinian crackdown on militants and discuss with Israel steps to make life easier for the Palestinian people, a US state department spokesperson said.

The retired US Marine Corps general's first trip, in November and December, was met with one of the worst bouts of bloodshed of the 15-month Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation and made no progress on a peace plan at the center of Middle East diplomacy since April.

The region has been relatively calm for two weeks, but Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has insisted on seven days of complete quiet before moving to a US-led truce-to-talks plan.

The Palestinians, who say the Israeli stance means a single gunman could block the peace effort, want immediate implementation of proposals leading to peacemaking.

A US state department spokesperson declined to endorse Sharon's view of a week of total calm.

"I ain't been counting days of quiet, if you've noticed," Richard Boucher told a daily news briefing.

Zinni, who was called back to Washington on Dec. 15, was to meet Israeli officials on Thursday and Palestinian officials on Friday. US officials in Washington said that he and state department mediator Aaron Miller had set off on Wednesday.

His trip was to last until early next week after which he will return to Washington to report to Secretary of State Colin Powell, Boucher said.

Washington wants the violence to end to maintain support in the Middle East for its pursuit of Osama bin Laden, who it says masterminded the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States. *Reuters*

Vieques lawsuit dismissed

WASHINGTON—A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit filed by Puerto Rico that sought to halt US Navy training exercises on the island of Vieques, citing a lack of jurisdiction in an order released on Wednesday.

Puerto Rico sued the Navy in April to force compliance with a new noise-limit law in the US Caribbean territory and the Federal Noise Control Act, which gives states authority to control noise levels in their jurisdictions.

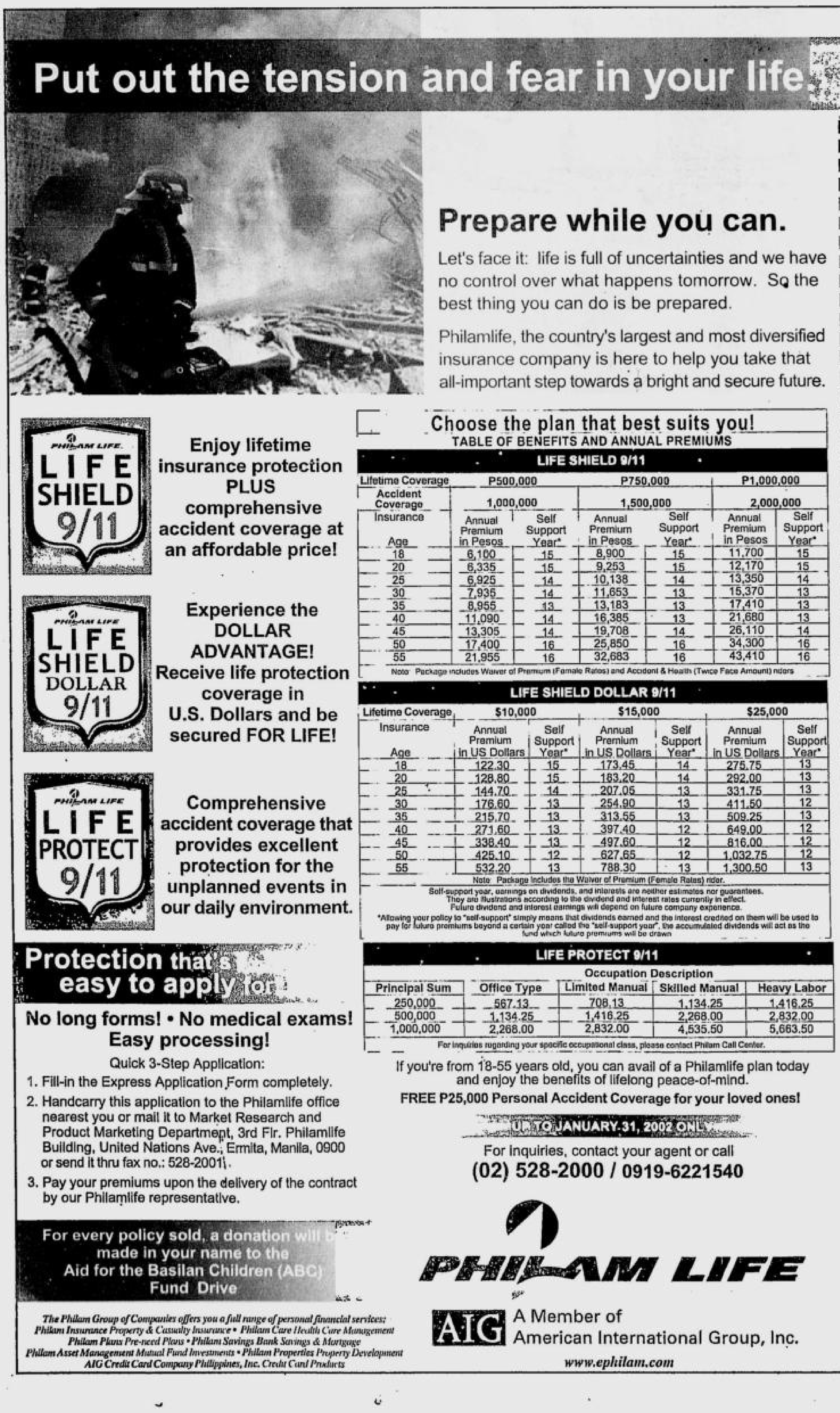
US District Judge Gladys Kessler threw out Puerto Rico's legal action, saying the territory did not have the right to file a federal lawsuit to force compliance with a local noise law.

"While the political and policy issues raised in this case are complex and involve the clash of many important interests, the legal issue, in contrast, is simple and straightforward," Kessler wrote in the decision, handed down on New Year's Eve but made public on Wednesday.

"The Noise Control Act does not provide the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico with a private right of action to sue in federal district court for the Navy's failure to comply with the peak sound pressure limits established by the Noise Prohibition Act," Kessler wrote.

Calling the decision "erroneous," Puerto Rico Justice Secretary Anabelle Rodriguez said the Caribbean island's government would appeal the decision.

The United States has used Vieques, a 13,360-hectare island off eastern Puerto Rico, as a bombing range for more than 50 years, but it has faced increasingly vociferous protests by Puerto Ricans and environmentalists. *Reuters*



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Accident Coverage	1,000,000		1,500,000		2,000,000	
Insurance Age	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in Pesos	Self Support Year*
18	6,100	15	8,900	15	11,700	15
20	6,335	15	9,253	15	12,170	15
25	6,925	14	10,138	14	13,350	14
30	7,935	14	11,653	13	15,370	13
35	8,955	13	13,183	13	17,410	13
40	11,090	14	16,385	13	21,680	13
45	13,305	14	19,708	14	26,110	14
50	17,400	16	25,850	16	34,300	16
55	21,955	16	32,683	16	43,410	16

Note Package includes Waiver of Premium (Female Rates) and Accident & Health (Twice Face Amount) riders

LIFE SHIELD DOLLAR 9/11

Lifetime Coverage	$10,000		$15,000		$25,000	
Insurance Age	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*	Annual Premium in US Dollars	Self Support Year*
18	122.30	15	173.45	14	275.75	13
20	128.80	15	183.20	14	292.00	13
25	144.70	14	207.05	13	331.75	13
30	176.60	13	254.90	13	411.50	12
35	215.70	13	313.55	13	509.25	13
40	271.60	13	397.40	12	649.00	12
45	338.40	13	497.60	12	816.00	12
50	425.10	12	627.65	12	1,032.75	12
55	532.20	13	788.30	13	1,300.50	13

Note Package includes the Waiver of Premium (Female Rates) rider.

Self-support year, earnings on dividends, and interests are neither estimates nor guarantees. They are illustrations according to the dividend and interest rates currently in effect. Future dividend and interest earnings will depend on future company experience.

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250,000	567.13	708.13	1,134.25	1,416.25
500,000	1,134.25	1,416.25	2,268.00	2,832.00
1,000,000	2,268.00	2,832.00	4,535.50	5,663.50

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Express Application Form

PROPOSED INSURED

Surname	Given Name	Middle Name
Aliases	Date of Birth	Place of Birth
Sex ○ Male ○ Female	Age	Height
Civil Status ○ Single ○ Married ○ Widow ○ Separated		Weight
Residence Address		Telephone No.
Business Address		Bus. Tel. No.
Specific Occupation and Duties		Annual Income
Relationship of Proposed Insured to Owner Payor *(if applicable)*		
PRODUCT NAME ○ Life Shield 9/11 ○ Life Shield Dollar 9/11 ○ Life Protect 9/11		
AMOUNT OF COVERAGE	RIDER *(if applicable)*	
Beneficiary's Name		Age

OWNER / PAYOR

Surname	Given Name	Middle Name
Aliases	Date of Birth	Place of Birth
Sex ○ Male ○ Female	Age	Height
Civil Status ○ Single ○ Married ○ Widow ○ Separated		Weight
Residence Address		Telephone No.
Business Address		Bus. Tel. No.
Specific Occupation and Duties		Annual Income
MODE OF PAYMENT ○ Annual ○ Semi-annual ○ Quarterly ○ MSA/BPS ○ SMPDC		
IN CASE OF PREMIUM DEFAULT ○ Premium Loan ○ Paid-up Insurance ○ Extended Term Insurance		
Relationship to PI.	Name of Trustee (if beneficiary is below 18)	

QUESTIONS: (CHECK ANSWER FOR BOTH PROPOSED INSURED & OWNER/PAYOR)

	PROPOSED INSURED	OWNER / PAYOR
A. Has the Proposed Insured (PI) or Owner/Payor (O/P) ever been told that he has cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high blood pressure, kidney or nervous disorder? (If "YES", underline which ailment or ailments).	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No
B. Does the PI or O/P have any abnormality or impairment in his health or physical condition?	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No
C. During the past 5 years, has the PI or O/P consulted any physician for medical treatment, or been confined in a hospital, clinic or similar institutions?	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No
D. Does the PI or O/P engage in motorcycle / motorboat / auto racing, sky diving, scuba diving or other hazardous avocations?	☐Yes ☐No	☐Yes ☐No

For each "YES" answer to any of the questions above, please give full details in the space below. For questions A,B, & C, include physician's name and address, hospital, date and nature of consultation, sickness or impairment. Use an addendum form (FormGF7C) for additional answers and/or beneficiaries. Please don't forget to sign these additional forms.

PROPOSED INSURED OWNER / PAYOR

ENDORSEMENTS AND CHANGES (For Home Office use only)

I understand that all statements and answers contained herein and in any addendum annexed to this application, as well as those made to the Medical Examiner in Part II (if applicable) hereof are full, complete and true to the best of my knowledge and that any policy issued under this application **will not be in force until I have made the first premium payment during my lifetime and good health.** I also understand that Article 1250 of the Civil Code of the Philippines (R.A. 386) shall not apply to any payments made or to be made by either party to any policy issued under this application.

By purchasing this policy and signing below, I represent that I am not a U.S. person for purposes of U.S. federal income tax and that I am not acting for, or on behalf of, a U.S. person. If my tax status changes and I become a U.S. citizen or resident, I will notify Philamlife within thirty (30) days. (U.S. citizens or residents must strike out this clause and initial the changes at the left side.)

Proposed Insured's Signature __________
Owner's Signature __________
Signed at __________
Date Signed __________
Agent's Name & Signature __________
Agent's Code __________
Agent's Contact No. __________

APPLICATION NO. __________
DEPOSIT PAID __________ CR No. __________

Form No. GF - 150 - A

AUTHORIZATION TO FURNISH MEDICAL INFORMATION
(This form should be completed for each case)

We hereby authorize any person, organization, or entity that has any record or knowledge of my health and/or that of __________ to give to the Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company any and all information relative to any hospitalization, consultation, treatment or any other medical advice or examination. This authorization is in connection with the application for insurance and all claims arising therefrom. A photographic copy of this authorization shall be as valid as the original.

Signature of Proposed Insured Signature of Owner Signature of Legal Guardian Signature of Witness

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

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Star witness in kidnap hunted

By Jhunnex Napallacan
and Debra Jane Magallon
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The police director for Central Visayas has ordered the arrest of a star witness in the kidnapping of an 11-year-old son of a Chinese-Filipino businessman.

Chief Supt. Avelino Razon directed the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID-7) and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG-7) to immediately find Oster Repollo, who escaped from CIDG custody.

"Alert all units to be on the lookout for Repollo and arrest him once sighted," Razon said in a marginal note on the report submitted by Supt. Edwin Diocos, CIDG-7 chief, on Repollo's disappearance.

Razon told the Inquirer that he also ordered the Regional Internal Affairs Service to look into the liability of some CIDG-7 personnel.

Two members of the CIDG-7 office were on duty when Repollo disappeared on Dec. 29. They were identified as SPO1 Genaro Boja and PO1 Alvin Bayo.

Repollo had been in the unit's custody since August last year when he was arrested for his role in the kidnapping of James Ryan Yu on July 23.

He later tagged a fugitive policeman, PO2 Engilberto Durano, as the mastermind in the kidnapping.

Yu, accompanied by househelp Joel Bation, was walking to school when he was seized by two men riding on a motorcycle a few meters from his home in Peace Valley Subdivision in Barangay Lahug, this city.

Repollo was the one tasked with handing over a letter demanding ransom money to Bation. The letter was to be delivered to the boy's parents.

Repollo and five others were later charged with kidnapping before the regional trial court here. Repollo had already testified in court and had undergone cross-examination.

Lawyer Enrique Lacerna, CIDG-7 chief investigator, said Repollo was waiting the court's decision on his application to turn state witness when the accused was reported missing.

Boja noticed Repollo's disappearance about 8 p.m. of Dec. 29, but he informed the other CIDG personnel about it only the following morning.

A policeman assigned at the CIDG-7, who asked not to be named, said Repollo had sent him a text message telling him not to worry because he was safe in Danao City, 33 km north of here.

He assured the policeman that he would return to the CIDG-7 office on Jan. 5.

Diocos said he had not received any information about the text message but promised to check on it.

He ordered his men to be vigilant in locating Repollo because "I am concerned about his safety." People implicated by Repollo in the Yu kidnapping might get back at him, he added.

Diocos, however, said he was confident that Repollo would return as he might have just missed his family and wanted to spend New Year's Day with them.

Before he left for Manila on Dec. 23 for his Christmas vacation, Diocos recalled that Repollo cried and told him that he wanted to see his family in Mindanao.

Release of ₱5.2M for toxic waste victims urged

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Even under President Macapagal-Arroyo, Malacañang has not released the P5.2 million that the Department of Health had asked the Estrada administration in 1999 for the medical treatment of 173 toxic waste victims in Central Luzon.

This was learned Thursday from officials of the People's Task Force for Bases Clean-up, who urged the immediate release of the money.

They said a six-month monitoring that the task force concluded last month in communities around Clark in Pampanga and Subic in Zambales recorded at least 111 children afflicted with "various ailments that are closely associated with toxic waste exposures."

The "repetitious occurrences" of nervous system 1disorders, like cerebral palsy, congenital heart disease, tumor, liver and kidney disorders and leukemia are "alarming," according to Myrla Baldonado, PTFBC executive director.

Despite the rising number of cases, she said the Department of Health did not have the resources with which to respond to the problem.

In 2000, the DOH dipped into its own budget, releasing P2 million to the University of the Philippines' National Poison Control and Information Service, a health official said.

The university used the money for the detoxification of residents who stayed at the Clark Air Base Command (Cabcom) evacuation center right after Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991.

For its part, the PTFBC gave immediate attention to life-threatening cases with the funds solicited from private groups, Senators Loren Legarda Leviste and Sergio Osmeña III, and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

The P50,000 monthly support from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) was stopped late last year, it was learned.

The P5.2 million was requested by the DOH's environmental and occupational health cluster after then President Joseph Estrada signed Executive Order 202 creating the Philippine Task Force on Toxic and Hazardous Waste on Jan. 18 last year.

Estrada, before meeting with then US President Bill Clinton in Washington, also earmarked to the PTFHW at least P50 million from the Presidential Social Fund.

. Eleven months later, the task force's budget was reduced to P24.9 million, according to Geri Geronimo Sañez, chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' hazardous waste management section.

To date, Baldonado said the PTFWH is a task force without any fund. Among the national agencies in the task force, it is only the DOH that has persisted to get a share for its health action for Clark and Subic.

The P5.2-million fund is allotted for the diagnosis and treatment of 173 victims, health assessment of 1,038 residents, assessment of drinking water quality, epidemiological study and upgrading of facilities at the Jose Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital in the City of San Fernando where victims are sent for referrals.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming widespread rains over Southwestern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 23° Lo 11°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 28° Lo 17°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 21°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 28° Lo 20°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 28° Lo 19°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 29° Lo 20°
Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 23°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 24°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 28° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Rainy	Hi 29° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/01/04/02

ROUNDUP

Robber kills old woman

CANDELARIA, Quezon—An 85-year-old woman was robbed and stabbed dead by a still unidentified man on Tuesday on her way to church to attend her first Mass of the year. Police said the victim, Genarda Pabellosa, of San Pedro Subdivision in Barangay Malabanban Norte, was walking on a dimly lit area when she was attacked. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Dead man found

TIAONG, Quezon—The body of a man, apparently a shooting victim, was found in Barangay San Agustin here shortly before New Year's Eve. Police said villagers found the body of Danny Falcon, 29, sprawled along the provincial road going to San Antonio town. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Truck falls; 2 killed

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Two men were killed while another was injured after their truck fell into the Balili River here on Tuesday. Reports from the Office of Civil Defense identified the fatalities as Nobre Peligman, the driver, of Atok town; and Alexander Soriano. The Isuzu Elf truck, which was bound for Baguio City, hit the road's railings at 3:20 p.m., causing it to swerve and fall into the river. A third passenger, Samson Vicente, 13, suffered fractures on both legs and was taken to the Benguet General Hospital.

Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Bus passengers robbed

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Five men armed with handguns and grenades robbed passengers of a Manila-bound bus here on Saturday. A belated police report said the robbers, mostly in their 20s, boarded the Aladdin Bus at the Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo road here at 8 p.m. When the bus entered the North Luzon Expressway, the robbers drew their weapons and announced a holdup. They ordered the bus driver to keep driving while they divested the passengers of jewelry, money and cellular phones. The armed men alighted in front of the Muñoz Market in Quezon City, and took two female passengers with them.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Robbers flee with ₱2.5M

PALO, Leyte—At least six unidentified armed men fled with P2.5 million in cash and checks after breaking into the warehouse of Coca-Cola Bottlers Inc. in Barangay Daganas, 5 km from the capital town of Catarman in Northern Samar on Tuesday. Domingo Saliling, security guard of the warehouse, told police that the intruders disarmed him and tied his hands and his feet with electric wire. They broke into the sales office and fled with P393,994.75 in cash and P2,126,795.03 in checks.

Cynthia A. Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau

Optimistic about sugar

BACOLOD CITY—Sugar Regulatory Administrator James Ledesma has expressed optimism that 2002 will be a good year for the sugar industry. Ledesma said he expected sugar prices to average P850 per kilo bag (l kg) compared to P830-P840 last year. "Although sugar production for crop year 2001-02 is expected to be slightly below target, we will improve our figures by the third week of January," Ledesma said. From an estimate of 1.89 million metric tons, he said sugarcane production might only be 1.8 million MT because of the floods that hit the country last year. But Ledesma said it was too early to say if the government should import sugar to meet the possible shortfall.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Bloody family reunions

PAGBILAO, Quezon—The New Year's Day reunions of two neighboring families along Carillo Street in Barangay Parang, this town, turned into a bloody rumble that resulted in the death of one person and the serious wounding of four others on Tuesday night. Police identified the dead victim as Jovie Reyes, 42 and the wounded as Norberto, Rhoderick, Gloria and Cruzaldo, all surnamed Zulueta. Police investigators said Cruzaldo, who was reportedly drunk, challenged the Reyes family to a fistfight. A heated argument ensued, resulting in a free-for-all. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Man, son found dead

CALAUAG, Quezon—A former overseas contract worker and his 2-year-old son were found dead with a bullet wound each in the head in an apparent suicide on Wednesday in Barangay Baclaran, this town. Police identified the victims as Lucero Recogermoso, 32, and his son Zeus. Police said Recogermoso's wife left the house early morning that day to attend a seminar. When she came back near midnight, she found her husband and son lying in a pool of blood inside the bedroom. Police found a .22-cal. Magnum revolver and two empty shells inside the room. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 sailors killed in freak accident

DAVAO CITY—Two crewmen of a Lithuanian cargo vessel died while three others were injured in a freak accident while conducting a routine check-up of their vessel on Wednesday at the Minterbro Wharf in Ilang, Tibungco District, here.

Chief mate Antanas Kuktorovas, 37, and sailor Vasilij Chook, 55, died on their way to the San Pedro Hospital.

Injured were Valirij Maslov, 48, second mate officer; Viktor Geinbechnier, 46, sailor; and Ilja Petinov, 24, fourth engineer.

Senior Supt. Wilfredo Garcia, city police chief, said the five crewmen boarded a lifeboat to conduct a checkup of their vessel, the MV Lyra, at around 3 p.m.

But the boat accidentally fell while being lowered about 10 meters from the sea. The victims hit the waters first, while the boat turned upside down and hit them on the head.

The bodies of the victims were brought to the Angel Funeral Parlor.

Meanwhile, the body of a 60-year-old American was found inside the Regency Inn on Villa Abrille Street here on Thursday.

Vice Mayor Luis Bonguyan identified the dead as Joseph Loivelli, who checked in on Dec. 22 last year.

Hotel officials said the American had failed to come out of his room since Monday. A stench coming from inside the room led hotel officials to decide to forcibly open the door.

Police said they were still waiting for a representative of the US Embassy before conducting an autopsy on Loivelli.

An investigator said no traces of violence were found on the body, although foul play was being considered.

In yet another incident, a Dutch man was brought to the hospital after falling off the roof of a two-story house in Bucana District here on Wednesday night.

Willembrordus Bartholomeus Van Diddelaar, 56, of the Netherlands, climbed to the roof after being told that it was dangerous for him to walk around as he might be abducted. *Anthony S. Allada and Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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AFP, MILF rebels clash anew; thousands flee

By Edwin O. Fernandez and Ferdinand O. Zuasola
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—Thousands of civilians fled their villages after Moro rebels stormed Barangay Nabundas in Mamasapano town in Maguindanao on New Year's Day.

Dr. Tahir Sulaik, provincial health chief, said at least 700 Muslim families have fled to the town center of Mamasapano and were being attended to by health workers.

It was the first major skirmish between government forces and the military in Maguindanao since the government and the MILF started observing a cessation of hostilities in November.

According to the military, at least two rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front were killed during the air and ground assaults.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said the civilians fled when the rebels, led by Commanders Odin and Maki Dampao and Sammy Gambal, attacked.

"The military has to use its machinery to drive them away because of their number and firepower," Ando told the INQUIRER.

He said the guerrillas numbered about 100.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the incident was triggered by a family feud.

He said the assault could not be considered a violation of the ceasefire agreement that the rebel front signed with the government.

"It was not sanctioned by the MILF leadership . . . we religiously abide by the ceasefire agreement with the government," Kabalu said.

He said that based on an MILF investigation, civilian volunteers in the village killed a member of a family in Barangay Nabundas several days ago.

The victim was incidentally an MILF fighter and that some of his relatives, who are also with the MILF, went out to avenge his death.

In another violent incident, two Mandaya tribesmen, one of them a tribal leader of Cateel, Davao Oriental, were abducted and later killed by suspected communist guerrillas.

The killings happened as the tribal folk in the province intensified their "*pangayao*" or tribal war against the communist rebels.

The bullet-ridden bodies of Prosperador Abarca, 54, a Mandaya leader and chair of Barangay Mainit, and his relative, Jonnie Bagyuhanon, 27, were found on Wednesday in Barangay Abihod.

Police said Abarca and Bagyuhanon were abducted by members of the communist New People's Army from Sitio Magubahong, also in Abihod, on Dec. 28 last year.

The NPA has yet to issue a statement about the incident.

Mandaya tribesmen decided to take up arms against the communists several months ago after a series of harassments against them.

The provincial government has extended its "all-out" support to the "*pangayao.*"

"The tribal war is aimed at flushing out the communist guerrillas from *lumad* communities here," Alejandro Aquino, provincial legal officer, said.

Supt. Catalino Cuy, police provincial director, said Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil was "keen on the idea of arming the Mandayas (to fight the NPA) but she wanted them to be recruited first as militia members" to prevent any legal complication.

Since the declaration of the tribal war, Mandaya tribesmen claimed to have killed at least 10 NPA rebels.

A human rights group, Karapatan-Mindanao, said the victims were poor farmers.

Balweg's 'keeper of flame' dies

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The bible that had kept peace between Cordillera rebels and the government for over 15 years, was "orphaned" here before New Year's Day with the sudden death of its keeper, 76-year-old Mt. Province elder "Ina" Lourdes Limmayog.

Limmayog had been a staunch lobbyist for Cordillera autonomy. She participated in the 1987 peace negotiations between rebel priest Conrado Balweg and then President Corazon Aquino at Mount Data in Mt. Province.

Thirteen years later, Limmayog participated in a Supreme Court suit filed by the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) which sought to compel then President Joseph Estrada to abide by the peace pact's terms.

Limmayog died from severe liver complications here on Dec. 30.

A headstrong leader, Limmayog had criticized the government and the military for "coercing CPLA veterans to unite" to obtain fresh government funds. She was referring to a P86-million budget allocation to finance the integration of 264 CPLA members into the military.

Limmayog issued her criticism during the celebration here of the Sept. 13 *sipat* (cessation of hostilities) anniversary by militia forces loyal to Balweg.

Breakaway CPLA leader Mailed Molina, mayor of Bucloc, Abra, and a faction loyal to former rebel James Sawatang held a separate *sipat* celebration with Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Limmayog's hardline stance was echoed by elders Mario Agosto, 78, and Peter Galingan, 68, during the celebration that was attended by Balweg's widow, former rebel Corazon Balweg.

All four later swore on the authenticity of the peace pact on the bible used in the peace pact signing in 1987.

The bible now sits forlornly on top of Limmayog's wooden casket.

A standard hardbound Gideon edition, the bible has the gold inscriptions "To the People of Cordillera," and "President Corazon C. Aquino" running across its soft-leather cover. The date "Sept. 14, 1986" is posted on top of the Bible.

Aquino handed to Balweg the bible, a rosary and the Armalite rifle given by then Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Fidel Ramos, at Mt. Data where the talks were held.

In exchange, Balweg gave Aquino a spear and a shield, symbols of the Igorot warrior's ultimate defense and goodwill.

Limmayog told the INQUIRER in January 2000 that Aquino's tokens were secured by the elders. "To relinquish them would be to end the *sipat,*" she said.

But she frequently brought along Aquino's bible, which she described as a symbol of the Christian "peace" her province always aspired for.

"That bible was very important to my province . . . It was enlightening. It was a gift from the government and we all wanted to imbibe their peace token," she said.

Her son Berto said the family had already discussed the Bible's fate.

"Perhaps we will keep it. We are mother's heirs and we can be its custodian. We don't know how the CPLA will feel about that, but we understand what mother fought for, and we can keep that fire burning ourselves," Berto said during Limmayog's wake.

He said Limmayog had been a well-respected elder because of her ties to several tribal peace agreements since the 1960s among Cordillera communities in her hometown of Sadanga, Mt. Province, and neighboring Kalinga and Ifugao.

It was in one such peace settlement where she befriended Macliing Dulag, the martyred Kalinga chief who led the first Igorot opposition against the Chico Dam project, a development program sponsored by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Berto said her mother's friendship with Dulag helped her focus her aspirations for Cordillera autonomy.

"INA" Lourdes Limmayog (third from left) was the trustee of a bible offered to slain rebel Conrado Balweg by then President Corazon Aquino in 1987. The bible had been an icon of peace used by Balweg loyalists in the last 15 years. With her in this photo taken on Sept. 13, 2001 at the Church of Resurrection in Baguio City is peace negotiator Peter Galingan, "Ama" Mario Agosto and Balweg's widow Corazon.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Tidal wave batters C. de Oro village

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A 20-foot tidal wave hit Barangay Macabalan here on Wednesday, forcing several residents to flee the village.

"It was a rare occurrence for a tidal wave to hit the (Macajalar) bay, and it was fortunate that no one was injured," Matela said.

In Ozamiz City, residents of two coastal villages also fled after waves battered their houses early Thursday.

No one was hurt, but social welfare officials said at least 59 houses were destroyed by the waves that hit Sitio Opol in Barangay Catagman and Barangay Carmen.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the earthquake that jolted most part of Mindanao on Tuesday did not trigger the waves.

The tremor, measuring 5.3 in the open-ended Richter scale, originated 76 kilometers east of General Santos City and had weakened as it hit several areas, including Davao City, at around 7:29 p.m.

In Mati, Davao Oriental, patients confined on the second and third floors of the Davao Oriental Provincial Hospital rushed out of the building.

"We remembered the strong quake of Jan. 1 last year which struck at about 7:35 in the evening. We were all so terrified that we scampered for safety. We all thought that it would become stronger than last year's," Lovely Caspi, who was visiting a patient in the hospital, said.

Tuesday's tremor was also felt in General Santos and Koronadal, South Cotabato, Bislig in Surigao del Sur, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Compostela Valley, Agusan del Sur and Butuan City, and Cagayan de Oro.

Taglucop said Mindanao was prone to high-intensity earthquakes, but stressed that these were helpful in most cases.

He said the occurrence of the tremors was a "good sign" that the earth was releasing tensions.

When stress is released through jolts of smaller magnitudes, the chance that a catastrophe is brewing is very dim, he explained.

Taglucop cited as example the Baguio City tragedy in 1990 when, he said, there was so much stress accumulated in the earth's fault line, which triggered the deadly tremor, measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale.

Hundreds of people died in that tragedy, while millions of pesos worth of property, including the Hyatt Terraces Hotel, were destroyed. ***Grace Cantal-Albasin, Anthony S. Allada, Joel B. Escovilla, Ryan D. Rosauro, Dennis Jay C. Santos and Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Fire razes Zamboanga town hall

OZAMIZ CITY—A fire destroyed the municipal hall of Tambulig town in Zamboanga del Sur on New Year's Day.

Residents abandoned their merrymaking activities in welcoming the year in the early hours of January and headed for the town hall with buckets in hand, taking turns in putting out the fire.

Their efforts were futile as the flames continued to rage.

Several minutes later, firemen from Molave and Aurora arrived but it was already too late. Damage was placed at P6 million.

Officials said that had there been a fire truck, some important documents kept inside the town hall could have been saved.

The fire was blamed on faulty electrical wiring.

The Tambulig town hall is the second government center destroyed by fire in Zamboanga del Sur in eight years. The first was the Dumingag town hall.

In Cotabato City, two more victims of the grenade attack near the military's main camp in Maguindanao on New Year's Eve died while undergoing treatment at a government hospital.

Norma Datukaka, 35, who was four months pregnant, and her relative, Kadatuan Datukaka, 29, died on Wednesday at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center.

Earlier, Sgt. Benigno Caparas of the Army's Armory unit died shortly after the 7 p.m. blast at a flea market in Barangay Crossing Awang on Jan. 1.

The market is several meters away from the headquarters of the Army's 6th Infantry Division.

Speculations had been rife that the grenade accidentally fell from the hands of one of the soldiers at the market, but these were denied by military officers.

"They do not carry grenades while doing their marketing and the grenade used was different from those issued to military men," Maj. Julieto Ando, division spokesperson, said.

Ando also confirmed that at least three persons were taken in for questioning. ***Ryan D. Rosauro and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

CPLA suit worries Malacañang

Military cautioned on 'unification' of factions

BAGUIO CITY—Malacañang officials have cautioned the military against rushing its "unification" efforts involving three factions of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA).

Renato Diaz, presidential adviser for Northern Luzon, said the "unification" was "not yet ripe." He said local officials tried to arrange a "unification" ceremony on Dec. 30 at the Presidential Mansion here, with President Macapagal-Arroyo as witness, but Palace officials had turned it down.

Instead, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. announced a power-sharing arrangement among the feuding CPLA leaders at the Speaker's cottage outside the mansion that same day.

"*Hindi pa siya hinog, hindi pa hinog* (The unification is not yet ripe, not yet ripe). This is not something you rush blindly into. There is time for discussion, and we are still at the talking stage," Diaz explained.

Malacañang's chief concern is the impact of the CPLA's supposed power-sharing deal on a pending Supreme Court suit, filed against Malacañang in January 2000 by a CPLA faction loyal to its founder, slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg, according to lawyer Nestor Atitiw, CPLA special counsel.

Atitiw said on Thursday that Diaz had begun talking independently with the Balweg loyalists to smoothen their access to the Palace, "and probably to settle the issues we raised before the Supreme Court."

The CPLA and its political arm, the Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBAd), filed the suit questioning a directive issued by then President Joseph Estrada that terminated the governing agencies of the Cordillera Administrative Region.

They asked the High Court to compel the government to submit to the terms of the 1987 peace agreement reached at Mount Data in Mt. Province that then President Corazon Aquino had committed to recognize.

Atitiw said the resolution of the case would have wide-ranging impact on other peace agreements, particularly the accord that Moro leader Nur Misuari signed with then President Fidel Ramos signed in 1995.

Both agreements sought the fulfillment of a 1987 constitutional provision creating autonomous governments for the Cordillera and Muslim Mindanao.

The government has been able to install the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Atitiw said Balweg's CPLA loyalists and their elders have yet to decide on the suit's withdrawal.

"We understand the implications of the suit, and we know Malacañang does not want that complication (especially with their difficulties with the Moro National Liberation Front). I have not yet submitted my pleadings. I will wait for two weeks to see what Malacañang wants to offer, but I don't know what will happen. For now, the suit stands," he said.

During a Dec. 30 CPLA command conference hosted by CPLA members loyal to Balweg, Atitiw said militia leaders formally accepted a Palace offer to forge a mutual coexistence agreement with two CPLA splinter groups led by James Sawatang and Mayor Mailed Molina of Bucloc, Abra.

But he said the Balweg faction leaders were not expecting De Venecia's announcement that a deal had already been forged.

"We were tricked again. We arrived there because of an invitation to discuss a pre-conference agenda. We did not expect (De Venecia) to announce to the media that we are now united. We are open to unity, but this must be done on our own terms. We should not be coerced," Atitiw said. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Youths to be taught world heritage protection

VIGAN CITY—The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is pinning its hope on the youth in preserving the fast dwindling local culture and heritage.

Richard Engelhardt, Unesco regional adviser for culture in Asia and the Pacific, urged young delegates to the second sub-regional workshop for Southeast Asia here to learn how to protect the world heritage for the future generation.

Delegates from Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines attended the weeklong workshop conducted by the World Heritage Education Project.

"We need to involve the empowered youth with an active role in the preservation of our local culture because of the influence of Western values due to globalization and the media," said Unesco consultant Ricardo Favis.

The workshop participants assessed the four-year action plan adopted during the first sub-regional workshop held in Sukhothai, Thailand, last year.

"If progress has been slow, we want to know why and (we) want to know how can we get faster. If it has been fast, we want to know what else we can do," Engelhardt told the INQUIRER.

He said Vigan City was chosen as the workshop site because of its commitment to the preservation of its World Heritage site.

The local community and the schools in Vigan are actively involved in preserving the heritage, he noted.

One of the topics discussed during the workshop here was the use of visual and performing arts to teach heritage.

"We need to have creative tools, strategies to be used by teachers to be more effective in creating awareness of the heritage," Favis said.

During the workshop, the participants showed their talents in drama, sketching and painting based on their own culture and heritage.

Engelhardt said one danger in preserving a world heritage site is when local officials and residents could not cope with the increased number of tourists visiting the area.

"The use of the site goes up very fast but the amount of money and manpower that go in taking care of the site generally does not rise as fast," Engelhardt said.

But not Vigan under Mayor Eva Marie Medina, Engelhardt noted. He said the conservation of Vigan heritage had steadily improved since it became a World Heritage site on Dec. 2, 1999.

Favis said the historic city of Vigan, formerly known as Ciudad Fernandina, is the only surviving colonial town of the Philippines.

"The historic Vigan has universal value and it's priceless. It would be a great loss if we lose Vigan as there would be no other Vigan," he said.

Vigan is one of the five World Heritage sites in the country. The others are the Tubbataha Reef Marine Park, the Baroque churches of San Agustin (Intramuros), Sta. Maria (Ilocos Sur), Paoay (Ilocos Norte) and Miagao (Iloilo), the Cordillera rice terraces, and the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Palawan.

Officials here have enacted ordinances aimed at conserving and preserving the city.

One ordinance defines the core and buffer zones of Vigan and the historical, cultural, education, aesthetic and economic parameters of their preservation and development.

Last year, another ordinance was enacted on the guidelines for the preservation and conservation of Vigan ancestral houses.

The guidelines serve as references for homeowners, architects, building officials and people involved in the conservation of the city's ancestral houses, Medina said.

She said the enactment of the ordinances was only the beginning of a long process of learning the essentials of conserving Vigan's most important cultural wealth.

She said the ordinances have enhanced the resolve of Bigueños to conserve their heritage. ***Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Baron's friend tags YOU chair in killing

(From page A1)

come out in due time."

In frequent conversations with Cervantes, the witness said the murdered soldier often told him how angry Cardeño was with him.

Cardeño was relieved as special assistant of retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina when the latter was still LTO chief.

The YOU chair was transferred to the Visayas after he was accused of instigating a destabilization plot against the Macapagal administration in October.

Consultation

The witness said Cervantes had often consulted him about his activities, particularly about his supposed plan to form a "wake-up" group to pressure the Macapagal administration into fulfilling the promises it made at People Power II.

But the witness denied that Cervantes had invited Sanlakas or a lawyer of Sen. Panfilo Lacson to join the group.

The disclosure of the witness bolstered a theory of the police that Cervantes waited for his killer on New Year's Eve in Las Piñas.

"Baron indeed knew his killer," the witness said. "He's very smart. He could not have been easily killed just like that."

Citing Cervantes' military training, the witness said the soldier often preferred to walk than to take the jeepney for practical and security purposes.

"It would have been very hard to kill him when he was mobile. He would easily merge with the crowd. He was also good at hand-to-hand combat," the witness said.

Cervantes appeared to have been waiting for someone on Monday when a gunman approached him from behind and shot him in the head.

Cervantes could have been killed by the person he was waiting for or by another sent by the one he was to meet, the witness said.

Cardeño called in sick

Cardeño has not reported for work after the Christmas vacation. He was expected to be back at the Police Regional Office-Western Visayas (PRO-6) headquarters in Camp Martin Delgado in Iloilo City on Dec. 28 but had failed to do so as of yesterday, according to Senior Supt. Wilfredo Blanco, PRO-6 deputy director for administration.

"He called me up to say he was sick but that was before Dec. 28," Blanco told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Abenina himself was relieved of his LTO post on Dec. 21. His relief came after retired Commodore Domingo Calajate, chair of RAM, had accused him of being a benefactor of Cardeño and of tolerating anomalies in the LTO.

A report of the anomalies in the LTO is one of the angles the police are looking into in connection with the killing of Cervantes.

Cervantes turned over documents on the anomalies to the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) a few days before Christmas.

Dante Jimenez, VACC chair and president, said the report was about "bidding irregularities" in the LTO when Abenina was its chief. The irregularities pertained to drug testing and insurance, according to Jimenez.

The VACC head said he had not yet turned over the documents to the Southern Police District. But Jimenez said the SPD director, Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez, was aware of the report and that he would give the police official a copy to help in the police investigation of the killing.

Cardeño and Abenina were named by Cervantes as among the six YOU and RAM members plotting a coup against the Macapagal administration. Cervantes named them in a report he delivered to the house of Pastor "Boy" Saycon, head of the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa), in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa, hours before he was shot dead on Dec. 31.

Investigators on Wednesday said they would summon those named by Cervantes in a report as coup plotters. Sources said the four other coup plotters were retired Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, Supt. Diosdado Valeroso, retired Col. Romeo Lim and Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor.

Baseless

Maligalig said reports linking him and several others to the killing of Cervantes were baseless and could have been easily checked.

Maligalig said he and the others were placed in a "difficult" situation because Cervantes was already dead.

"I can't react to anything . . . Will the police treat it as a dying man's declaration?" Maligalig said when asked to comment on Cervantes' report.

In the report, Maligalig was said to have been one of the issues that could be exploited by those supposedly plotting a coup as he was allegedly involved in "nefarious" activities at the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Corp. where he had been assigned as a director.

Maligalig disputed this, saying that the media should not have published that before checking the records.

"This is character assassination . . . The source is not credible," he said.

"We are leading quiet lives . . . . Who is Cervantes to question our qualifications? Is he questioning President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?" he asked.

Maligalig also criticized the police for announcing that members of RAM and YOU would be invited for questioning.

"The police have announced that we will be invited but no one has sent me an invitation . . . Maybe they are still typing it . . . I have been placed in a difficult situation," Maligalig said.

He reiterated that RAM was willing to cooperate with the police but added that they should be more circumspect before making any announcements.

"We are condoling with the family. We will cooperate (with the investigation). We are as anxious as anyone to get to the bottom of this," Maligalig said.

Check source

For police to get to the bottom of things, Maligalig suggested that investigators look for the source of Cervantes' information.

Maligalig said the "information" of Cervantes could have come from another source.

Cervantes, he noted, was "being used" or "was using" several groups. Maligalig said Cervantes could have angered members of these groups.

"Maybe he got the ire of some of those groups. Police should focus on who uses him, determine who talked to him," Maligalig said.

The former RAM spokesperson also noted that Cervantes had come out against YOU in several instances when he was claiming that he was a member of the group.

Maligalig asked why Cervantes went to the media when he had information about the coup plots if he worked for National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

"Why didn't he go to the Isafp (Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines)? There's something wrong here. Why did he do those things? For what?" he said.

Maybe, the former RAM spokesperson said, Cervantes wanted to get an appointment for himself.

Lawyers

Even before police could identify the suspects, a battery of lawyers yesterday volunteered to prosecute those behind the killing.

Leonard de Vera of the Equal Justice for All Movement will head the seven-man legal panel. This would include Nick Conti, a practicing lawyer; Pedro Prinsipe of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines; Dennis Funa, founder of the cause-oriented group Clamor; Argee Guevarra of Sanlakas; Jose Aguila Grapilon, former IBP president; and Alberto Hidalgo, also of the IBP.

If Cardeño failed to report or explain his absence within 10 days after Dec. 28, Cardeño would be declared Awol or absence without official leave.

This was the second time Cardeño failed to report on time after he was transferred in Iloilo in October. The order for Cardeño's reassignment took effect on Oct. 26 but was received by the PRO-6 only early November.

Cardeño, however, showed up at the PRO-6 only on Dec. 20 just before the Christmas vacation, Blanco said. He has not been given an assignment until now.

Valeroso, Cervantes: 17 text exchanges

(From page A1)

the text messages he sent me, the last one was left with me around 16:57 and 16:58 (4:57 and 4:58 p.m.)," he said, showing reporters the message supposedly coming from Cervantes saved on the "inbox" of his mobile phone.

The inbox contains incoming messages.

Valeroso said that neither he nor Cervantes had asked that they meet somewhere instead of talking by text messaging.

'Setting me up'

"I don't think that there was such a message that we meet. Why should I tell him for us to meet? I wasn't the one who initiated it. My feeling was that he was 'setting me up.'" he said.

"He was trying to be good to me but he left a report at the house of Boy Saycon linking me to an alleged coup plot. What is that? What's his reason for me to meet him? It's very treacherous," he added, referring to the alleged intelligence report that Cervantes delivered to Saycon.

At the time that Valeroso and Cervantes began texting each other, the latter was waiting for Saycon at his residence in Ayala-Alabang.

Citing the text messages saved on Cervantes' cell phone, Gutierrez said that Valeroso's message was sent around 4 p.m., noting that the exchange between the two friends lasted for an hour beginning at 3 p.m. Monday. The driver and a housemaid of Saycon told police that Cervantes left shortly after 3 p.m. without seeing Saycon.

"What I'm saying is that I wasn't the one he was waiting for (when he was shot)," Valeroso told the INQUIRER.

Witnesses had told the police that Cervantes appeared to have been waiting for the man who shot him dead.

Valeroso said it was Cervantes who texted him first around 4 p.m. on Monday, just as he woke up from a nap while he and his family were in Baguio.

Where are you?

"He was asking me where I was. He was trying to establish my location. And of course, for security reason, I did not tell him. I'm not used to telling my location to anyone, except my wife," he said.

Valeroso, his wife Ellen, their six children and two maids drove up to Baguio between 2 and 3 a.m. on Dec. 31. They returned to Manila the next day, arriving here around 5 p.m.

Valeroso said he welcomed any investigation. "That's normal procedure. But that doesn't mean that we are being pinpointed as the culprits."

Gutierrez said that the text messages dealt with the issue of the YOU leadership and membership.

Gutierrez declined to confirm or deny if Valeroso was the last person who called Cervantes on the latter's mobile phone.

Not suspects

But he said that he would summon Valeroso as well as the other members of the Rebolusyunaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM) and the YOU, whom Cervantes had accused of plotting a military coup against the Macapagal administration last Christmas.

The others tagged as coup plotters by Cervantes were retired Gen. Edgardo Abenina, Supt. Rafael Cardeño, retired Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, retired Col. Romeo Lim and Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor.

"The invitation to the personalities (to shed light on the killing) is meant to clarify issues," Gutierrez told reporters in Camp Crame, stressing that they are not yet considered as suspects.

Police have yet to identity the gunman.

Viewing of Christmas tape

Gutierrez said police investigators will view the tape of the Christmas party of the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa) in Makati on Dec. 18 so the eyewitness could identify if the man who shot Cervantes was among the three unidentified men who accompanied Valeroso and Cardeño to the party.

When shown the cartographic sketch of the assailant, Copa chair Pastor Boy Saycon had said that the sketch looked exactly like one of the three unidentified companions of Valeroso and Cardeño that night.

"The witness has to see the tape so he could identify which of the three was the suspect," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez voiced optimism that police will crack the case soon but admitted that there are still some loose ends.

"I hope this would be solved soon based on the flow of the evidence, testimonies and other documents. I hope we would be able to tie up the loose ends," he said.

Gutierrez also said that the Parañaque police would provide security to the family of Cervantes at his wake at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel in Parañaque because they have expressed fear about their safety.

"The family of Cervantes noticed some odd things. And they requested security so we provided security," he said.

No honors for Cervantes, says AFP

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL

THE MILITARY yesterday ruled out military honors for Baron Alexander Cervantes citing his dismissal from the service twice for going Awol.

"As a general rule, the Armed Forces of the Philippines provides honors to its personnel separated from service under honorable conditions," Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan, military spokesperson, said.

"In the case of Cervantes—we're not saying that he left the service (because of) other than honorable reasons—but he was (declared Awol), he was discharged," he added.

But Adan left a door opened when asked if Cervantes was entitled to military honors, saying that it was still a "gray area" that would have to be decided by the military.

"This is a gray area because those usually given honors are those who retired, served 30 years, or opted for optional or compulsory retirement . . . a clean exit. In the case of Cervantes, he was twice declared Awol, but this is not to disparage a person who is already gone. I'm just stating the Army regulation," he explained,

As a general rule, Adan said that a flag would be made available for the interment of the deceased.

Normally, an officer's coffin would also be guarded by soldiers and a flag would be draped on the casket.

During the burial, the deceased would be given a gun salute.

Adan's remarks came amid reports that the Cervantes family wanted Baron accorded with military honors because he was once a lieutenant in the Army.

Cervantes was called to active duty on November 1988 and appointed 2nd lieutenant on December 1989.

He was assigned to the 7th Infantry Division in 1993 but was tried for desertion that same year. He was dropped from the rolls in 1994.

He was reinstated in the military in 1998 but was promptly marked Awol again and dropped from the rolls.

Someone . . .

(From page A1)

ing of former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino.

A founding member of the Young Officers Union (YOU), Valeroso considered Cervantes a kid brother and at one time paid his tuition for one semester in law school. When Valeroso was implicated in several coup attempts against the Aquino administration in the late '80s, Cervantes made it a point to visit Valeroso's parents.

They were that close.

Ironically, his "kid brother" had implicated him in an alleged coup plot against the Macapagal administration.

As he denied any involvement of YOU in the murder, Valeroso pointed out that "the only person who would benefit from all these series of events is the government."

"I am speaking from the point of view of a former intelligence officer of the Philippine Constabulary," he said.

A member of PMA Class '79, Valeroso worked as special assistant to the executive director of the Philippine Center on Transnational Crimes before his reassignment to Mindanao.

He was assigned to Zamboanga last October after his name surfaced as one of the plotters against the Macapagal administration.

Cervantes had said during a radio interview last week that meeting of the officers and members of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansa Makabansa (RAM)-YOU was held in Puerto Azul on Dec.19 to plot a coup codenamed "Noche Buena."

"I categorically deny on record that there was a meeting in Puerto Azul, there is no coup," Valeroso said.

He said that talks about destabilization and coup d'etat had been conveniently used by the government to cover its incompetence.

He said that the government had the resources and the capability and would be the only beneficiary of what had happened.

"The economic growth that the government is saying should be translated as food on the table," Valeroso said.

In her Ulat sa Bayan last week, President Macapagal crowed about the country's economic growth.

Valeroso noted that he took up a business course at the Asian Institute of Management in the early '90s.

War chest

"Corrupt people in the government are the ones doing the destabilization," Valeroso added.

According to him, a person who wants to rule and does not have the mandate has to pay back a lot of people who has given the person that power.

"For the meantime the looting continues for a bigger 2004 war chest," Valeroso added.

He also said that a person in power would not be able to give in to everybody's request. These people would then start criticizing the government and become a problem.

Christmas party

Valeroso recalled he last saw Cervantes in the Christmas party of the Council for Political Affairs (Copa). He said that Cervantes was telling people at their table that he (Valeroso) paid one semester when he was in law school.

No rift

He added that on hindsight, his attendance at the Copa Christmas party could have been a setup.

A friend whom he did not name requested him to go to a house in Dasmariñas Village in Makati for a meeting with Copa members.

The meeting turned out to be the Copa Christmas party.

He remembered making small talk to Copa member Linggoy Alcuaz during the party but was feeling bad because he had to leave his son at the V. Luna Hospital for medical tests for admission to the Philippine Military Academy.

Valeroso talked about being set up to go to the Copa party as he suspected that Malacañang and Copa wanted to project later that there was a rift among the YOU members.

"There is no rift in YOU, the quarrel was between some RAM members and Baron," he said.

Last October, Cervantes was sending feelers that he wanted to go back to YOU, Valeroso said.

In 1998,Valeroso said Cervantes asked permission from YOU to organize his own group.

He was a convenor of an anti-Estrada group known as Aklas Pilipino. The name "Aklas Pilipino" was pirated by Cervantes, according to Valeroso, from the YOU's umbrella organization of all its revolutionary forces. Aklas was actively used in 1989, Valeroso said.

Valeroso first met Baron in 1987 or 1988, when he went to the RAM office.

Cervantes volunteered to work with then Col. Gringo Honasan after he invited him for a parade in review in Letran where Cervantes was an ROTC officer, Valeroso said.

On the day Cervantes died, "he was texting me for us to meet. Had we met *baka pati ako* (I would also be dead now)," Valeroso told the INQUIRER. ***(See story on Page A1.)***

Malacañang blames foes, foes blame Malacañang

(From page A1)

In a news briefing, PCA head Linda Montayre said Cervantes could have been killed to stop the YOU, the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabansa (RAM) and the PCA from joining forces in the fight against the corrupt practices of the administration.

In a statement, the PCA said only Malacañang and the Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa) would gain from the killing of Cervantes, who had linked the PCA, YOU and RAM to an alleged coup plot before he died.

Cervantes, a consultant of National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, reportedly submitted a report of a supposed coup plot to Pastor "Boy" Saycon of Copa, a group identified with former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

Hours after leaving Saycon's house in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa, Cervantes was gunned down while waiting for someone in front of a convenience store in Las Piñas.

"His murder permanently prevented him from clarifying or rectifying the false statements he had made," PCA said.

"This is to the disadvantage of YOU, RAM and PCA and to the advantage of President Macapagal-Arroyo and Copa," the PCA said.

Graft put in backburner

With the killing of Cervantes "hogging the headlines, corruption and economic hardships hitting our people, particularly hunger and the loss of jobs," the Mindanao problem and "unrest of the Filipino people" will be relegated to the sidelines, according to the group.

The PCA said the death of Cervantes would place allegations of graft against the First Family in the backburner.

But Tiglao scoffed at suggestions that the Macapagal administration would benefit the most from the killing of Cervantes.

"By any stretch of imagination, I cannot see how a killing on the last day of the year will benefit an administration which has been laboring day and night to give an image of stability," Tiglao said.

LINDA MONTAYRE: The Palace did it again. JOAN BONDOC

As to the identities of the killers, the PCA said investigators should look no further than Copa and the National Security Council, which are the "natural and logical planners of his schedules and activities."

The PCA proposed that a body "composed of investigators of integrity, credibility and independent of Malacañang" be formed to unmask the real killers.

Opposition Rep. Gilbert Remulla of Cavite insinuated that Malacañang could be behind the Cervantes' death.

Elaborate plot

"Is the death of Cervantes part of an elaborate plot to destabilize the Macapagal administration while pinning the blame on the opposition?" said Remulla, whose older brother Jesus Crispin is spokesperson of the opposition Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

The congressman also suggested that Saycon be investigated.

Remulla said something did not fit when Cervantes went to Saycon's house to deliver documents supposedly detailing a coup plot by RAM and YOU.

"Why would Cervantes go to Copa, particularly Boy Saycon, and hand over those alleged documents when he (Cervantes) is very well aware that Saycon has strong connections with YOU?" Remulla said in a statement.

Remulla said it was "foolhardy" for Cervantes to hand over such sensitive documents to Copa because a few weeks earlier, the group had expressed dismay about the Macapagal administration.

Tiglao said he saw nothing wrong with Cervantes' submitting the report to Saycon, who is not a government official, much less an intelligence official.

"He (Cervantes) is a consultant. He is not an employee, he is not a staff member" of the National Security Council, Tiglao said.

"It would be a big question if he is a staff member of the NSC," Tiglao added.

Raw info

He described as "raw" the supposed report of a supposed coup plot being hatched by RAM and YOU that Cervantes had submitted to Copa.

"These are raw reports coming from one particular consultant, subject to verification by the intelligence community," Tiglao said.

Tiglao insisted that the murder of Cervantes was politically motivated.

"It was a personal grudge, it wasn't a robbery, it wasn't a kidnapping case and by process of subtraction, you're left with a political motive," he said.

Montayre took the President to task for saying in a radio interview that politics had something to do with the slaying of Cervantes.

"We want the President to clarify and explain why, without an investigation, she already declared the killing of Cervantes as being political in nature," Montayre said.

"What was her basis? Where did she get it? This has a strong bearing on our statement that the administration has a hand in the killing of Baron Cervantes," she added.

Joey Bilangilot of the Bedan Advocacy and Consciousness Enhancement Society said the President's statement points to an "organized propaganda" to put a political color in Cervantes' killing.

RP tennis alive and well–Buddy

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ANDRADA

PHILIPPINE Tennis Association president Buddy Andrada yesterday said Philippine tennis is "alive and kicking."

At the same time, he blamed the dearth of talent for the decline of the country's performance internationally.

Reacting to his critics, Andrada said the Philta was doing well until tennis stars like Felix Barrientos, Maricris Fernandez and Joseph Lizardo retired ahead of their Southeast Asian counterparts.

Andrada, the association head since 1987, also warned the opposing group led by Children Tennis Workshop's Jovy Mamawal to make sure all the regional clubs — which will cast their votes in the regional polls tomorrow – are "affiliated, accredited and a Philta member of good standing."

He said there are strict requirements to gain voting rights under the Philta constitution and added that he will see to it that these are all implemented during election day.

"We will follow the constitution to the letter and if these club members are found to be ineligible, then we will have no choice but to disqualify their votes," said Andrada.

Mamawal said he acknowledged the "danger" that Andrada would nullify the votes of the region the will elect their candidates. He said they "are putting on a united stand to end Philippine tennis' continued deterioration under Andrada's administration."

Meanwhile, at least six incumbent regional vice presidents have withdrawn their support from Andrada due to "zero development program especially in the countryside."

RVPs for Bicol Jimmy Sison and Raul Acuña yesterday openly threw their support behind Mamawal because they claimed that the current Philta administration failed to show their support even if they continue to pay sanction fee.

"The truth is, I have resigned three years ago because there is really no Philta support or program in the regional level. I endorsed Mr. Efren Enverga who also quit after only a year because there were no meetings during his term," Sison said in a statement.

Other incumbent RVPs expected to give way to Mamawal's group are lawyer Nestor Corpuz of Region 1, Col. Felix Manubay of Region 2, lawyer Arthur Orito of Region 7 and Dr. Rafael Omega of Region 8.

But Andrada maintained that they lined up 47 junior tournaments for this year alone and that under his helm, the Philippines was able to beat Japan and Indonesia in Davis Cup ties.

Said Andrada: "It is wrong to expect Philta to produce world-class talents because Philta can only do so much in supporting them. But we have no control over their personal decisions regarding their careers. We can't do anything about the talent-drain."

If I were Buddy

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I HOPE I'm wrong but I predict a tight, if not controversial, contest for positions of 11 regional vice presidents tomorrow in the elections of the Philippine Tennis Association.

Jovy Mamawal, the moving spirit behind a group brimming with reforms, seems bent on making the initial thrust in his bid to unseat Buddy Andrada in next year's presidential derby. Jovy is among 11 candidates for vice president and, with a victory, will line him up for the presidency in 2003.

Buddy, the Philta president since 1987, will be a virtual spectator as his term does not expire until next year.

But watch it, Jovy. You will be up against a formidable foe. Not your fellow VP hopefuls but Buddy himself.

Sure, Buddy's not running. But as sure as Nick Joaquin not interested at all in learning how to use the laptop, Buddy's hand will dip into the political fray tomorrow. Buddy isn't Philta president for 14 years for nothing. Buddy's battle-scarred. He knows the road to fame, the path to shame, so well his bets will win even without him not present in tomorrow's polls.

True, he is a mere outsider in the elections. But knowing Buddy, he's done his job before Jovy could even cast his vote.

Don't say I didn't warn you, Jovy: Buddy fired a double-barreled salvo yesterday when he said some of the candidates might not be eligible to run tomorrow.

I have this hunch Buddy would be up to something—not necessarily sinister—to derail Jovy's first serious attempt to go into Philta politics. It would be a pity if that'd materialize.

I hate to see Jovy lose.

Jovy is a fresh wind, a vibrant rustle. For years now, he has almost single-handedly lifted developmental tennis to heights through his wondrous Children's Tennis Workshop. Given the chance, he will make a good leader someday.

Tomorrow, Buddy's political acumen will be put to a test this way: If Jovy falls, Buddy's victory will be hollow. But if Jovy wins, that will be Buddy's legacy to Philippine tennis.

And so, if I were Buddy, instead of destroying Jovy, he should nurture the kid. By doing so, he'd be protecting the future of Philippine tennis officialdom.

■

My family and I condole with Dean Tony and Marina Abad for the demise of their daughter, Mara. Mara's remains lie at the Claret Chapel, UP Village, Quezon City. Also to the loved ones left behind by my high school classmate, Manuel Pimentel, whose passing was relayed to me on New Year's Eve by another dear classmate, Pepito Raposas.

2 young ladies loom as Peace chess favorites

TWO pretty young ladies loom as dark horses in this year's Philippine Executive Active Chess Express Center of Asia (Acca)

Both ladies will also be spicing up Peace 2002 by providing a delightful distraction to the predominantly male congregation.

They offer a most welcome respite from the punishing strain of tournament play, much like what green landscape does to tired eyes and classical music to the weary soul.

Tara Jade Aurelio, 23, an accountant at SGV and Co., and Mylene Rotor, 27, of Land Bank, are two women who fought on even terms with male executives in Peace 2001.

Aurelio, a former four-time Palarong Pambansa titlist from Negros Occidental, moves swiftly, just like her idol, former world champion Viswanathan Anand. She has shown little rust from a long layoff finishing her studies at Silliman University.

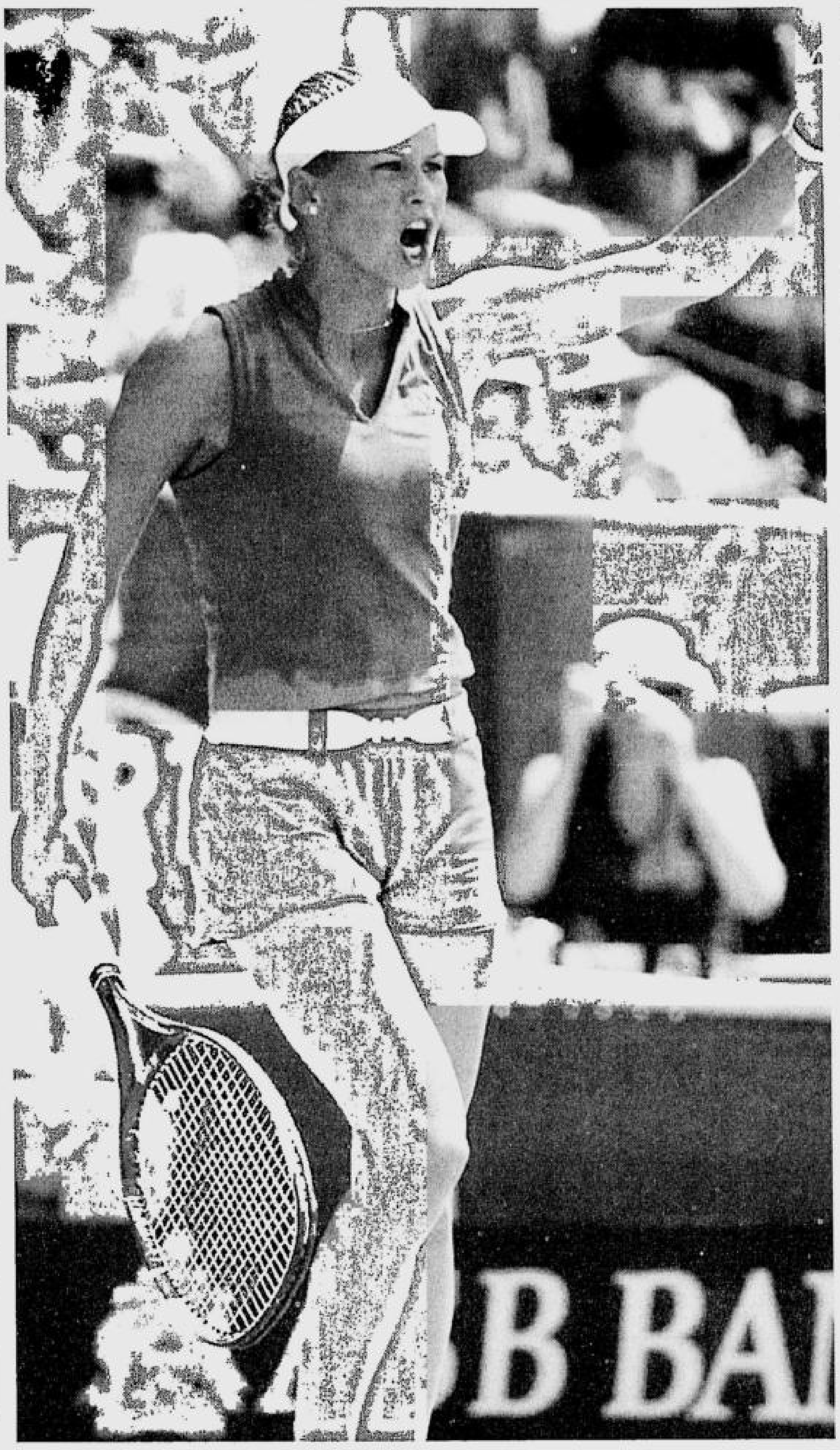
During the audit season, Aurelio put aside chess for a while and concentrated on her work assignments with corporate clients. But like the true chessplayer that she is, she could not shy away from the allure of this absorbing mental game. In her most recent participation in Peace 2001, she made waves by upsetting businessman Douglas Peña, a former leg champion, in a stunning display of feminine chess power.

Dacanay paces Milo Checkmate

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Dexter Dacanay posted one win and one draw Wednesday to lead the 13-above division in the second round of the Milo Checkmate final selection tournament held at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (Badminton Bldg.) in Vito, Cruz, Manila.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1988, the Philippines beat Taiwan, 79-74, to earn a shot against Qatar in the first Asian 17-under youth basketball championship in Qatar. Also today in 1993, Teodulfo Nones II defeated Ian Pascua in 38 moves of a King's Indian Defense to claim the Seiko Films' kiddie chess title at the Metropolitan Chess Club.



KOURNIKOVA: "I fight for every point." AFP

Big Dome derby attracts who's who in cockfighting

THE COUNTRY'S who's who in cockfighting will return to the scene on Jan. 14-16 at the resumption of the blockbuster NCA (National Cockers Association) 7-Cock Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Noted sportsmen Boy de Roca and RFP, William Co and Dicky Lim will host this New Year presentation as a prelude to the blue-ribbon World Slasher 8-Cock Derby on Jan. 21 23-25 featuring an international field led by topnotch cocker-breeders from the United States.

It will be hosted by Big Dome owner Nene Araneta, three-time Rizal Gov. Ito Ynares and the Firefly Group.

Seeing action are the entries of NCA council members Nene Araneta, Ito Ynares, two-time Cocker of the Year Jun Santiago, engineer Pacifico Berin, Gerry Fevidal, respected lawyer and former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, Pampanga's pride Jun Jingco, Rep. Claude Bautista, Louie Cua and Philip Chiongbian. Also entered are the game fowl of Ambassador Danding Cojuangco, James Chiongbian, Makati Mayor Jojo Binay and Vice Mayor Nestor Mercado, Eddie and Bomboy Araneta, Mario Villamor, Iking Araneta, Ram Lopez, Georgie Antonio, Boy Jiao, Lito Orillaza, Ryoichi Saito, Romy Castro, Ruel Ricafort, Boy de Roca, Manny Co, Allan Tan, John Capinpin, William Co, Dicky Lim, Rep. Rudy Albano and the Firefly Group (Metro Manila); Peping Cojuangco and Esting Teopaco of Tarlac, Patrick Puno, Jet Fernando, Alex Escalona, Pampanga's touted Jingco and Madlambayan brothers, Boyet Joson and Frank Berin, Dennis Roldan, Meycauayan Mayor Eddie Alarilla and Ruel Feliciano and Sons (Central Luzon); Boy Velez, Johnny Jalandoni, Ramon Guanzon, Ed Ledesma, Boy Nilo Lizares and Felix Trebol (Negros Occidental); Ito Ynares, Rudy Salud, Vic Amante, Blandy Tolentino and Pol Estrellado (Southern Tagalog); and Boyboy Roa, Claude Bautista, Boy Primallion, Kano Daniel, Arthur Uy and Jung-Jung Morales (Mindanao).

The NCA kicked off its seven-cock series last Dec. 10-12, with R&B of Pol Estrellado emerging joint champions.

Then in a fitting followup, the Bautista-Roa combine scored a sizzling back-to-back victory by winning the fund-raising NCA 5-Cock Derby last Dec. 17 together with battle-tested Thunderbird-Firefly I of Nene Araneta, Firefly-Thunderbird 13 of the Firefly Group, Spencer sa Cainta of William Co and Mulawin of Frank Berin and Rep. Rudy Albano.

Pasay 4-cocker tonight; 60 fights up

PASAY City Cockpit's initial salvo for 2002 fires off at 7 tonight via the "Joshua 4-Cock Derby," featuring more than 60 fights.

To host the event is veteran cocker Peping Suarez of San Juan. Entry fee is P10,000 while the cash prize at stake is P300,000.

Submission of weights (1.8 kg to 2.4 kg) is today, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. and interested parties may contact 816-6750, 843-1890 and 843-1746.

Meanwhile, pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano announced that another 4-cocker is slated on Jan. 11 to be hosted by Cavite sportsman Inger Valdez.

On Jan. 18 is the first 4-cock derby offering of the newly formed Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA).

Kournikova on verge of first win

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—A tired but determined Anna Kournikova came from a set and 4-1 down Thursday to beat Swiss Emmanuelle Gagliardi and reach the semifinals of the ASB Bank Classic women's tennis tournament.

Kournikova, ranked 74 in the world, overcame searing heat and a lack of tough recent matches to beat 69th-ranked and unseeded Gagliardi 2-6, 6-4, 7-5. She will face Israel's Anna Smashnova in Friday's semifinals.

There were moments, particularly on service, when Kournikova seemed to be favoring her previously injured left foot, though she covered the court with reasonable freedom.

Kournikova saw her world ranking plummet from eight last year when she spent eight months off the professional circuit with a stress fracture.

Kournikova said she was not troubled by the injury during the game but had to dig deep to overcome her spirited Swiss opponent.

"I was playing on will today," Kournikova said. "She was playing great and I was just fighting. That's my game—I fight for every point.

"I was very tired at the end of the game but I'm all right now. I just shouldn't have made it so difficult for myself.

"I made too many unforced errors in the first set and I was fighting, trying to find my game. I haven't played many hard matches since February last year so I need this match."

Kournikova made four times as many unforced errors as her opponent in the first set which Gagliardi won 6-2. She continued to struggle at the start of the second set and quickly found herself 4-1 down.

Visibly rising to the challenge and working the ball to Gagliardi's weaker backhand, Kournikova won five straight games to take the set 6-4.

Kournikova served for the match for the first time at 5-3 in the third set but lost the first three points of her service game and eventually dropped serve on a disputed linecall.

Gagliardi held serve for 5-5 and Kournikova served to lead 6-5, then had two match points on Gagliardi's serve in the 12th game, converting the second for set and match. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Clijsters prevails

PERTH, Australia—Belgian Kim Clijsters made amends for a major lapse earlier in the tournament when she overwhelmed France's Virginie Razzano in a Hopman Cup clash at Burswood Dome here Thursday. Clijsters, ranked five in the world, romped to a straight sets win over 72nd-ranked Razzano, 6-3, 6-2, on the sixth day of the million dollar (500,000 US) mixed teams' contest. It was a welcome return to form for Clijsters, who on Tuesday crashed to a straight-sets defeat to Italian giant-killer Francesca Schiavone, ranked 31 in the world. *AFP*

Ivanisevic falls

DOHA, Qatar—Radek Stepanek, a qualifier from the Czech Republic, pulled off a major upset Tuesday in the second round of the $1 million Qatar Open by beating second-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 7-6 (4), 6-2. Stepanek, 23, looked at ease throughout the match. He broke in the second, fourth and eighth games of the season set. *AP*

Winning jockey killed

LOS ANGELES—Dusty Stimpson, a jockey who last month rode the winner in one of the richest stakes in quarter horse racing, was killed in a traffic accident. He was 29. Stimpson died early Tuesday after being ejected from a car that struck a guard rail at a motorway interchange, said Scott Carrier, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County coroner. He won the last two runnings of the Los Alamitos Million, the most recent aboard Your First Moon on Dec. 15. Stimpson was the second-leading rider in earnings with more than $1.7 million in 2001 at Los Alamitos. Stimpson and his girlfriend, Jody Behunin, were returning home from a concert when the accident occurred. *AP*

RACING TIPS

AT SAN LAZARO BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Replica 2. Isabel's Gossip
Race 2—1. Marginal Note 2. Top Secret 3. Precious Time 4. The Mailman
Race 3—1. Adrenalin 2. Truthful Lady
Race 4—1. Alabang Girl 2. Inside Treasure 3. Hinobaan Boy 4. Double Header
Race 5—1. Prince of Africa 2. Smart Kevin 3. Cobra Door 4. Timeless Beauty
Race 6—1. Dixie Dancer 2. Playing With Fire 3. Mark's Treasure 4. Gifted Galloper 5. Palachik
Race 7—1. Sunny View 2. Happy Return
Race 8—1. Sexy Royal 2. Arabica 3. Strong Bird/ Run Doding Fly 4.Tayp Ko yan 5. Earth Angel 6. Yoko Lady

Fans want Tony Lang back

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

YOUNG and innovative Yeng Guiao, 2001 Philippine Basketball Association Press Corps Coach of the Year, is lucky in many ways.

By steering phenomenal Batang Red Bull to a dramatic 4-2 victory over powerhouse San Miguel Beer in last year's Commissioner's Cup title series, 42-year-old Guiao joined the fabled Baby Dalupan, the winningest coach in the play-for-pay league; Tommy Manotoc and the late Ed Ocampo as the only PBA coaches to mentor two teams or more to the championships. Guiao, a son of former Pampanga Gov. Bren Guiao and now a board member of the province, won his first two championships with the Swift Mighty Meaties in 1992 and 1993. His three titles tied him with Arturo Valenzona as the all-time sixth winningest coach in the 27-year history of the pro-league behind Dalupan's 15, Norman Black and Tim Cone's 10, Manotoc's six, Dante Silverio's five and Ocampo and Robert Jaworski's four.

In winning last year's Commissioner Cup, Guiao set a record as the fastest expansion team by winning the championship in only five conferences. Not only that. Although Red Bull lacked experience, Guiao had the good fortune of acquiring no-quit import Tony Lang, who provided the mature judgment to the team at the crucial moments en route to the championship. Lang was eventually named Best Import of the Conference.

A 6-foot-7 forward who played for Duke University on two US NCAA finals and five NBA teams, Lang has been endorsed by Red Bull diehards to rejoin the team in its PBA campaign this year starting with the First Conference on Feb. 10. Two imports with a combined maximum height of 13 feet are eligible to play in this season-opening conference where 12 teams, including candidates to the Asian Games divided into two groups, are competing.

"This team will always play its best," said franchise owner George Chua of Photokina Marketing Corp. "We'll try not to disappoint the fans. Our modest achievement is a reflection of a lot of hard work and dedication."

With an intact lineup and the addition of new faces who will be picked from the draft on Jan. 13, its loyal supporters predict another respectable performance from Batang Red Bull, the league's youngest and tallest team.

* * *

BOY MARQUEZ. Due to space constraints, this added info on Alfonso "Boy" Marquez, one of the nominees in this year's Basketball Hall of Fame awards, did not see print. Here's the missing portion:

In 1958, Marquez was named Most Valuable Player of the Micaa and Mr. Basketball by the Philippine Sportswriters Association. An all-around player like the fabled Caloy Loyzaga, Boy Marquez could play center, forward and guard. He saw action in the 1959 World Basketball Championship in Chile and the World Basketball Invitational hosted by Manila in 1962.

Truly gifted, he represented the Philippines thrice in the Olympics: 1960 in Rome, 1964 in Tokyo and 1968 in Mexico, aside from seeing action twice in the Asian Games: 1962 Jakarta and 1966 Bangkok and three times (as a member of RP's champion teams) in the ABC (Asian Basketball Confederation): 1960 in Manila, 1963 in Taipeh and 1965 in Kuala Lumpur.

Florida Gators set records

MIAMI—Rex Grossman led University of Florida to touchdowns on the first six of his drives Wednesday as the No. 5 Gators set record after record in a 56-23 crushing of the No. 6 University of Maryland Terrapins in the Orange Bowl. Banished to the bench for the first 20 minutes of the game, Grossman threw for 248 yards and four TDs. Another so-called backup, third receiver Taylor Jacobs, caught 10 passes for 170 yards, both Orange Bowl records, to help turn coach Steve Spurrier's quarterback shuffle into a stunning offensive highlight show. *AP*

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▪ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Assa Abloy 2 hours ahead

AUCKLAND, New Zealand —Light winds slowed the leaders in the Volvo Ocean Race as they approached Auckland on Thursday to conclude the third leg of the global race from Sydney. Leading yacht Assa Abloy rounded Cape Reinga off the northern tip of New Zealand two hours ahead of Amer Sports One, but has since been traveling at under two knots, with little or no wind. Amer Sports One was only 19 nautical miles behind the leader, but the chasing pack is also closing in on the yacht and skipper Grant Dalton. *AP*

2002 SEASON

Lina Group newest PBA member

By June Navarro

THE LINA Group of Companies became the newest member of the PBA after the league's Board of Governors unanimously voted for its formal entry last night.

Although the passage of the Lina Group of Companies ran smoothly, the 10-man board imposed a five-year commitment on LGC, meaning the firm wouldn't be allowed to leave according to its will until 2006.

The same limitation was also imposed on Red Bull when the Thunder entered the league in 2000.

But while Red Bull went in as an expansion ballclub, the LGC was considered as a squad borne out of acquisition, thus the firm wouldn't be entitled to bring in players and Fil-American through the direct-hire policy.

"Based on past practices, its entry will be considered as an acquisition and not as an expansion squad," said PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino.

On Tanduay's exodus, Bernardino said the league felt sad but respected the Rhummasters' decision to bolt out of the PBA.

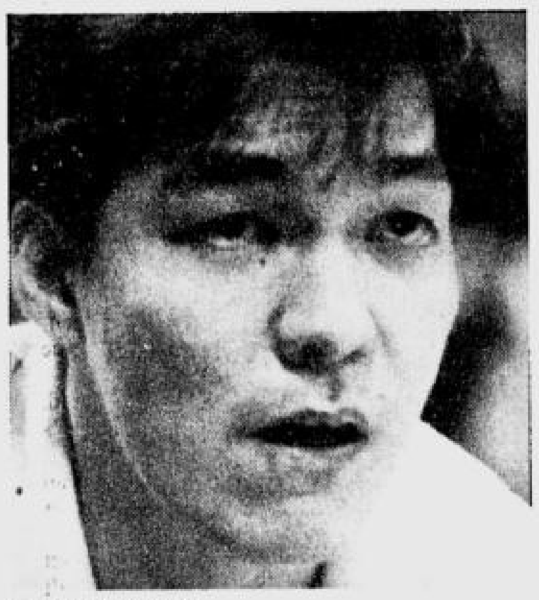
The LGC will carry the colors of Federal Express in the league with its chair Bert Lina as board governor and its president Lito Alvarez acting as alternate board governor and team manager.

The LGC is also entitled to enjoy the rights every member team has but will have no concessions for the meantime.

Meanwhile, the PBA extended the deadline for the submission of Department of Justice confirmation papers for Fil-foreign applicants to Jan. 10.

Alvarez added two tall and agile imports would bolster the squad when it plunges into action in the first conference of the 2002 PBA season.

The Commissioner's Cup will blast off on the first week of February with two national training teams to this year's Asian Games expected to slug it out with the league's 10 teams.



ALTAMIRANO

Purefoods rehires Eric for ₱8.2M

By June Navarro

PUREFOODS coach Eric Altamirano yesterday got a two-year extension worth P8.2 million from the Hotdogs' management.

Sources said the deal will add P3.8 million into Altamirano's bank account during the first year and fatten it by as much as P4.4 million in the succeeding year.

The 35-year-old Altamirano would receive at least P340,000 in monthly wages, excluding other bonuses and incentives.

"I'm really looking forward to this. I'm very happy the Purefoods management allowed me to continue with my plans for the team," Altamirano told the *Inquirer*.

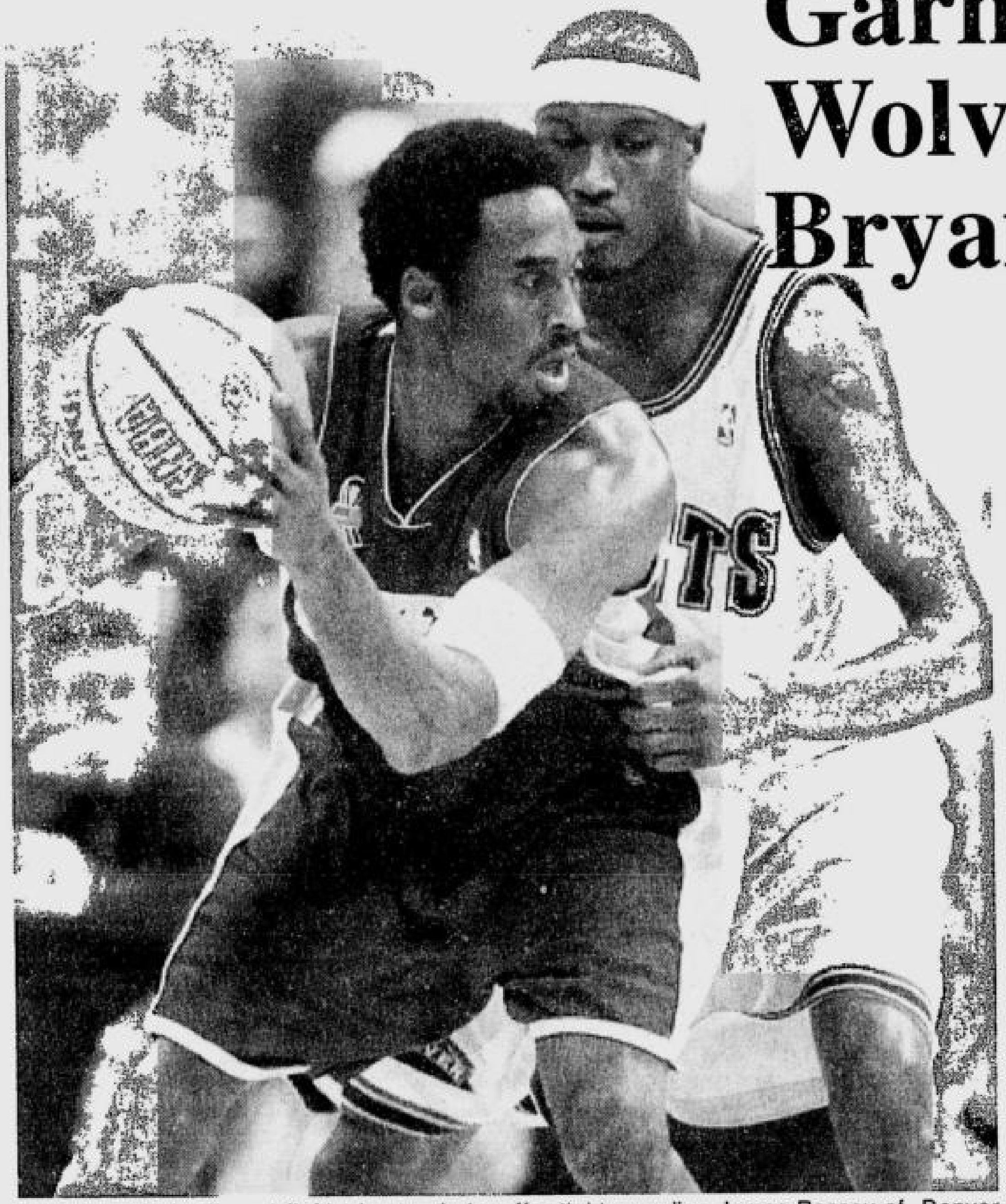
He added the next two years would be the Hotdogs' transition period, the changing of the guards from the Alvin Patrimonio era to potential franchise players like Noy Castillo, Richard Yee and Andy Seigle.

"We're looking at a new breed of stars in this team especially Castillo, Yee and Seigle. Slowly, we're trying to pass the baton from Alvin to these guys," said Altamirano, who started his professional coaching career also in Purefoods in 1997.

Before venturing into coaching, the former UP Maroon played for six years in the PBA, donning Alaska's jersey for two years (1989-1990) and moving over to Pepsi Mega and Shell before finally hanging up his sneakers in 1994.

Altamirano acted as assistant coach for Purefoods in 1995, became its bench tactician in '97 and transferred over to Mobiline in 1998.

After a two-year hiatus, Altamirano took the coaching reins from Derick Pumaren at the end of the 2000 PBA season after Pumaren came to terms with Tanduay.



LA Lakers' Kobe Bryant (left) tries to shake off a tight-guarding James Possey of Denver in the first quarter. Bryant lifted the Lakers to an 87-86 victory. AP

Garnett sparks Wolves' win; Bryant shines

MINNEAPOLIS—Kevin Garnett had 22 points and 19 rebounds and Anthony Peeler added 18 points Wednesday as the Minnesota Timberwolves beat the shorthanded Milwaukee Bucks 95-77 in the NBA Wednesday night.

Both teams' rosters were depleted by injuries. The Bucks' top three scorers - Glenn Robinson, Ray Allen and Sam Cassell - all missed the game, as did Joe Smith and Terrell Brandon of the Wolves.

Garnett scored 13 of his points in the third quarter as the Wolves broke away after holding a one-point halftime lead. Peeler opened the fourth quarter with his fourth 3-pointer as the Wolves built their lead as high as 24 points.

Lakers 87, Nuggets 86

In Denver, Kobe Bryant scored 28 points, including a six-meter (20-foot) shot that barely beat the shot clock with 55 seconds remaining, as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Denver.

Rick Fox had 17 points, and Samaki Walker had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers, who were without Shaquille O'Neal for the fifth successive game because of an arthritic big toe on his right foot.

Nets 92, Grizzlies 74

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Jason Kidd had 14 assists in 26 minutes and New Jersey held Memphis to a season-low seven points in the second quarter.

Aaron Williams came off the bench to score a season-high 20 points, Kerry Kittles added 18 points and Kenyon Martin had 15 for the Eastern Conference-leading Nets, who won for the fourth time in five games.

Spurs 97, Pistons 85

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 20 points and pulled down 15 rebounds as San Antonio won its second consecutive game.

Steve Smith added 15 points, Malik Rose 13 and David Robinson 12, as five players scored in double figures.

Detroit, which has lost eight of nine games, was led by Zeljko Rebraca with 17 points, while Chucky Atkins added 16 after moving into the starting lineup. Leading scorer Jerry Stackhouse was held to 13 points on 2-of-9 shooting.

Mavericks 107, Bulls 97

In Chicago, Steve Nash had 24 points and 11 assists, and Dirk Nowitzki scored all 18 of his points in the second half to lead the Mavericks to their 10th successive win.

Dallas played without guard Michael Finley, who missed his second consecutive game because of a strained left hamstring. Their winning streak is one short of the club record.

76ers 102, Suns 81

In Phoenix, Allen Iverson scored 29 points and three other Philadelphia players scored at least 15 as the 76ers used a 36-point third quarter to rout the listless Phoenix.

The Sixers, playing without Derrick Coleman, defeated a Western Conference team for just the third time in 15 tries this season. They are 2-3 with two stops left on their seven-game trip through the West.

Raptors 95, Trail Blazers 84

In Portland, Oregon, Vince Carter scored 28 points as Toronto built a 20-point third-quarter lead and held on to hand Portland its sixth successive loss.

Chris Childs returned to the lineup and added nine assists for the Raptors, who won two out of three on their short West Coast trip. The only loss was against Seattle, when Carter sat out with an injured left shoulder.

Complete results

Boston 110, Orlando 94; Cleveland 113, Golden State 98; New Jersey 92, Memphis 74; Minnesota 95, Milwaukee 77; Dallas 107, Chicago 97; San Antonio 97, Detroit 85; L.A. Lakers 87, Denver 86; Philadelphia 102, Phoenix 81; Toronto 95, Portland 84; Sacramento 105, L.A. Clippers 91. AP

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: NBA - Dallas Mavericks vs New York Knicks at 8:30 a.m. (r – 9 p.m.) on ESPN

US NCAA - Arkansas vs Memphis at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

POOL: Rack 'Em Up - Mosconi Cup Finals at 7 p.m. on ESPN

GOLF: Senior PGA Tour Year in Review 2001 at 9 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Inside the PGA Tour at 10:30 a.m. (r – 8:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

US Open Official Films - 1995 at 5 p.m. on ESPN

PGA Grand Slam of Golf 2001, Day Two at 10 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

CYCLING: Tour Du Faso 2001 Highlights at 6:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BOWLING: USA vs Europe Tenpin Bowling 2001 at 11 a.m. (r) on ESPN

SOCCER: English Premier Football League - Arsenal vs Leicester City at 7 p.m., Newcastle United vs Manchester United at 12 noon (r) on Star Sports

Tiger 5s 2001, Day 4 Highlights at 11 a.m. (r – 7:30 p.m.) on Star Sports

Chinese FA Cup 2001 Final #2 at 2 p.m. on Star Sports

EPL this Week at 6 p.m. on ESPN

Football Asia at 9 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

HOCKEY: NHL Power Week! at 12:30 p.m. on ESPN

Cassius, Gerald join JW

REIGNING Philippine Open champion Cassius Casas and last year's RP Open winner Gerald Rosales get the rare chance to play against the best players in the world when they compete in the Johnnie Walker Classic Jan. 24-27 at the Lake Karrinyup Country Club in Perth, Australia.

The $1 million event, which could rival the world's four major championships in terms of prize money and participation, will serve as a fitting venue for IMG backed Casas and Rosales to showcase their shotmaking skills against the likes of US Open champion Retief Goosen and former JW Classic winners Ernie Els and Michael Campbell.

The early list of players seeing action in the event, which has gained prestige and popularity through the years, includes American Notah Begay, Sergio Garcia of Spain, Scot Colin Montgomerie, Thomas Bjorn, Lee Westwood and Nick Faldo.

Casas never had a good crack at the JW Classic crown in a long, long time, either he was overwhelmed by the opposition or simply got clobbered by them. In fact, he has never kept track of his best finish in the prestigious event although he had a lucrative debut as a pro when he won $150,000 in a Johnnie Walker Skins Game at Wack Wack in 1993.

But the 34-year-old dusky shotmaker from Davao has vowed to dish out his very best in the four-day championship where he hopes to come up with a creditable performance in a bid to further boost his confidence in time for his campaign in the US Buy.Com Tour. Casas earned a spot in the elite cast through IMG (International Management Group), which manages his career as well as that of Rosales.

Villamor, Laput rule AIM Masters

VILLAMOR emerged team champion, while Jong Laput was the runaway individual winner in the recent AIM Masters Invitational amateur golf tournament held at the Rivera Golf Club in Silang, Cavite.

Laarnie Goseco, chair of the Alumni Association of the Asian Institute of Management (AAAIM), said the AIM Masters was a complete success.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos, who was the guest at the ceremonial tee-off, played the entire 18 holes of the Langer Course.

He was joined by Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Rod Feliciano, president of the National Golf Association of the Philippines; Benny Gopez of Mizuno/Gopez Corp., representing the corporate sponsors, Laarni Goseco, chair of the Alumni Association Asian Institute of Management (AAAIM) and Felipe "Boy" Diego, vice chair of AAAIM.

"Everyone will long remember the AIM Masters, from tee off to the last raffle prize, for the challenge, fellowship and camaraderie," Vice Admiral (Ret.) Louie F. Fernandez, chair of the organizing committee, said.

The Villamor Golf Club team composed of Roberto Sabularse, Norton Gonzales, Jun Chuidian and Toto Bautista returned the lowest team score of 65. They were followed by the Mizuno team led by Lovell Gopez with 68 and the Riviera Golf Club team led by Danny Pizarro with the score of 72.

Jong Laput, who led in the individual category, turned in the overall lowest gross score of 70. Alan Tabhan won the medal with his overall lowest net score of 65. Other championship medals were presented to Norton Gonzales in the Class A Division, Alfredo del Carmen in the Class B Division, Teddy Sandan in the Class C Division, Jing Lina in the Open Division (System 36), E.J. Villacorta in the Ladies Division and Danny Pizarro in the Seniors Division.

Bill Shaw tilt gets going Jan. 25-26

THE 13th Annual Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Classic will be held Jan. 25-26 at the East and West courses of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club with some 200 members and guest partners seeing action.

Deadline for submission of entries is 5 p.m. of Jan. 20, according to the eligibility rules. Late entries will be assigned zero handicap for the guest partners in the event which will use aggregate system in the East course and Scramble in the West course.

Sponsoring the event are Herma Group of Companies and Golforce Incorporated.

Participating teams will be divided into three groups which will have a champion, runner-up and third placer each. The team with the lowest net team score will win the overall championship.

Special prizes are also await players who can hit nearest to the pin on holes 3, 8, 11, 14 and 12 in the West course and holes 8, 16, 10 in the East course.

Hole-in-one feats will also be rewarded on holes 3, 8, 11 and 14 in the West course and holes 8, and 16 in the East course with Toyota Otis, Mitsubishi Motors Phils., Kymco as sponsors.

Play will be governed by the rules of golf of the United States Golf Association and the R&A as well as the local rules of Wack Wack, according to the organizers.

Entry fee is P5,000 per team which includes giveaways, freen fees, practice rounds, two buckets driving range, breakfast and lunch and raffle prizes.

Other hole sponsors are Samsung Electronics, Electrobus Consolidated, Rep. Gilberto Duavit, Cantada Sports Center, Citra Metro Manila Toolways, General Nutrition Center, Pacsports Phils., GG&A Clubshares, Equitable PCI Bank, Pacific Paint & Oil Meg., Custom Clubmakers, Bingo Bonanza and Smart Communications.

Woods favored in Mercedes Championship

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Tiger Woods arrived with only the bottom half of his goatee remaining, changed into golf shoes and was quickly out of sight.

Carts are allowed for the practice rounds at the Mercedes Championships, and about 50 fans had no chance of keeping up with him on the hilly Plantation Course at Kapalua. Taking a shortcut on the back nine and playing only six holes, Woods finished in 40 minutes.

Perhaps that kind of pace will set the tone for a new season.

"It's always important to win early," Woods said. "It's important to play well because it makes you feel better about the season."

It also eliminates foolish talk about a slump, which is what Woods had to endure last year until winning his first tournament at Bay Hill in March.

A year ago, Woods was coming off one of the greatest years in sports, winning nine PGA Tour events and three straight majors. The question was whether that would become a typical season or an exceptional one.

It looks now to be an exception, although that could change.

"I think it would be very difficult to accomplish that again," British Open champion David Duval said. "But I think he's capable of it."

Added Shigeki Maruyama: "He still plays in another world."

It all starts Thursday (Friday in Manila) along the rugged coastline of west Maui, where 32 PGA Tour winners gather for the season-opening Mercedes Championships.

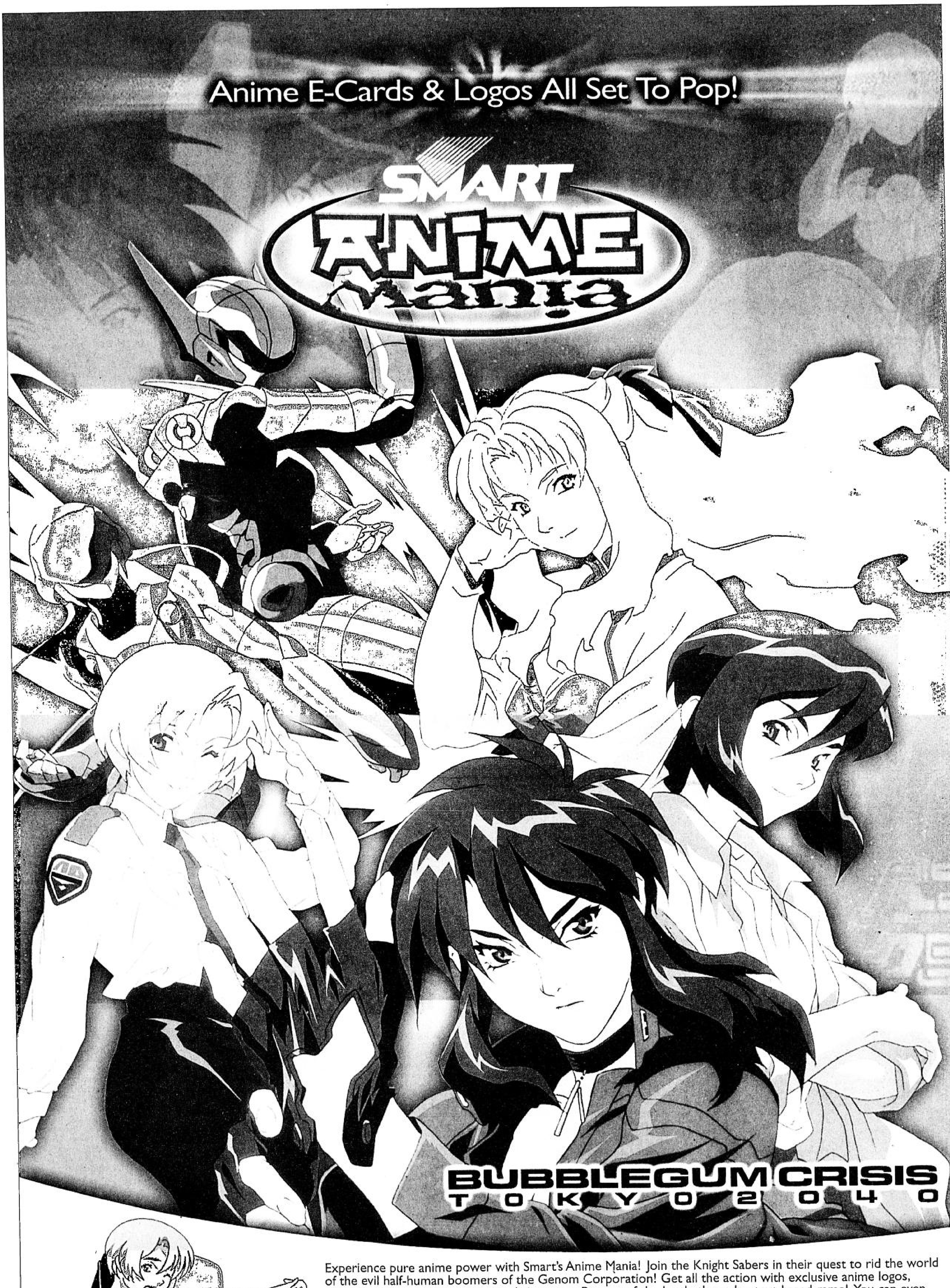
U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen came halfway around the world from South Africa, meaning all four major champions are in the field. The only two winners who didn't show were Phil Mickelson, who wants to spend time with his family, and Jose Coceres, who broke his arm playing soccer a couple of weeks ago in Argentina.

WOODS

DUVAL

New Zealand awaits Tiger

WELLINGTON, New Zealand —Tiger Woods' appearance next week at the New Zealand Open has brought with it increased security concerns and about a tenfold interest in media coverage, organizers said Thursday. Tournament coordinator Paul Gleeson said events following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States had heightened security awareness.



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To play the game, key in **PLAY ANIME** and send to **235**.

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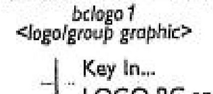

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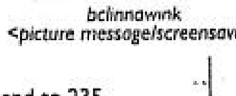
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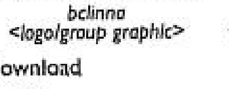
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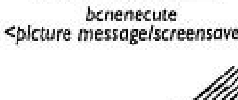
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Picture Messages	PIC <keyword> and send to 235
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LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

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Men in blue beaten up black and blue

PO2 FERDINAND Demdam and PO2 Jumat Ahamil of the Mandaluyong City police force suffered more than bruised egos on Wednesday when a gang of neighborhood tough guys beat them up to stop the lawmen from arresting a robbery suspect. But the policemen managed to get their man, robbery suspect Antonio Berlon, 30, of Barangay Plainview, Mandaluyong. *Nelson Flores*

TOLL collectors, like this one handing out stubs on the South Luzon Expressway, are in for a rough ride after residents slammed the toll increase imposed on Jan. 1. DENNIS SABANGAN

NBI to check Paoctf roster for Rizal Day bombers

PHILIP C. TUBEZA

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation wants to get a copy of the roster of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Task Force (Paoctf) to find out if there were Paoctf agents involved in the Rizal Day bombings a year ago, a ranking NBI official said yesterday.

Elfren Meneses Jr., NBI Anti-Fraud and Computer Crimes Division chief and the one in charge of the Rizal Day bombing investigation, said the bureau will ask for the list of Paoctf agents for "counterchecking."

Meneses said the bureau had asked the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines if they have in their roster one of the bombing suspects, a certain Col. Efren Torres.

Meneses said the NBI has yet to receive a "complete response" from the military and the police.

Torres, said to be a former police colonel, allegedly acted as the middleman between the masterminds of the bombings and the men who carried out the attacks.

But Meneses emphasized that the investigation is not a political witch-hunt, adding that the bureau witnesses have not mentioned the Paoctf.

Leftist activists asked the government Wednesday to investigate if Paoctf was involved in the Rizal Day bombings, after military intelligence men arrested Lt. Senior Grade Donn Anthony Miraflor and other Navy commandos for stashing 100 blocks of C-4 explosives.

Miraflor worked with the defunct Paoctf under Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

NBI TO CHECK/ A18

Senators look in on toll hike

BY ALCUIN PAPA
AND CYNTHIA D. BALANA

THE SENATE is poised to conduct a parallel investigation into the toll rate increases imposed on motorists passing through the South Luzon Expressway and the Skyway system.

This was revealed to the INQUIRER by Rey Junia, spokesperson of the Movement of Responsible Enterprise, a group of businessmen based in provinces south of Metro Manila like Laguna, Cavite and Batangas.

Junia said he discussed the matter with Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, who lives in Parañaque City.

"We briefed Senator Pimentel on the matter and the Senate is now looking at a parallel investigation," Junia said. He also revealed that Pimentel gave instructions to his staff to look into the issue.

Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta also accused the operators of Metro Manila's tollways of milking motorists with higher fees without first improving their services.

Oreta yesterday said the corporations must consider maintenance and expansion costs before implementing the road projects instead of

SENATORS LOOK/ A18

GOCCs top QC's tax delinquents

BY AGNES E. DONATO

GOVERNMENT owned and controlled corporations top the long list of delinquent taxpayers in Quezon City.

City treasurer Victor Endriga said the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System was on top of the list with an accrued unpaid taxes of P240 million.

But this amount has been reduced by P120 million after the MWSS and the city government entered into a compromise agreement, which also settled the matter of unpaid water bills of the past city administrations.

Endriga also reminded real estate owners of their Jan. 31 deadline for payment of taxes. He threatened real estate owners that if they don't settle their taxes, their properties will be included in the auction on Feb. 27.

Among the other government owned and controlled corporations that owe City Hall hundreds of millions in taxes are the Lung Center of the Philippines and the Philippine Heart Center.

Endriga said most of the GOCCs failed to pay their taxes because of the misconception that their properties were not taxable.

But the treasurer pointed out that there had already been several rulings by the Department of Finance and the courts withdrawing the tax exemption of GOCCs.

He said the failure of the past administrations to collect taxes properly was the reason why Quezon City lagged in terms of earnings.

GOCCs TOP/ A18

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Cowboy Grill 11th ARQUEZA ST, [illegible]	KOOL JACKS GOALKEYS/PHYRIGIAN	NO ENTRANCE FEE 525.1474/525.4269
Cowboy Grill 451 REMEDIOS ST. MALATE	KNIGHTS FEEDBACK	NO ENTRANCE FEE ☎521.8143
Cowboy Grill NOVALICHES Q.C	BROWNIE STREETLIFE/IMPROM2	HOMOSAPIENS ☎936.9757
Friends @ the square ST. FRANCIS SQ. ORTIGAS CENTER	KAKTOOZ	☎635.0279
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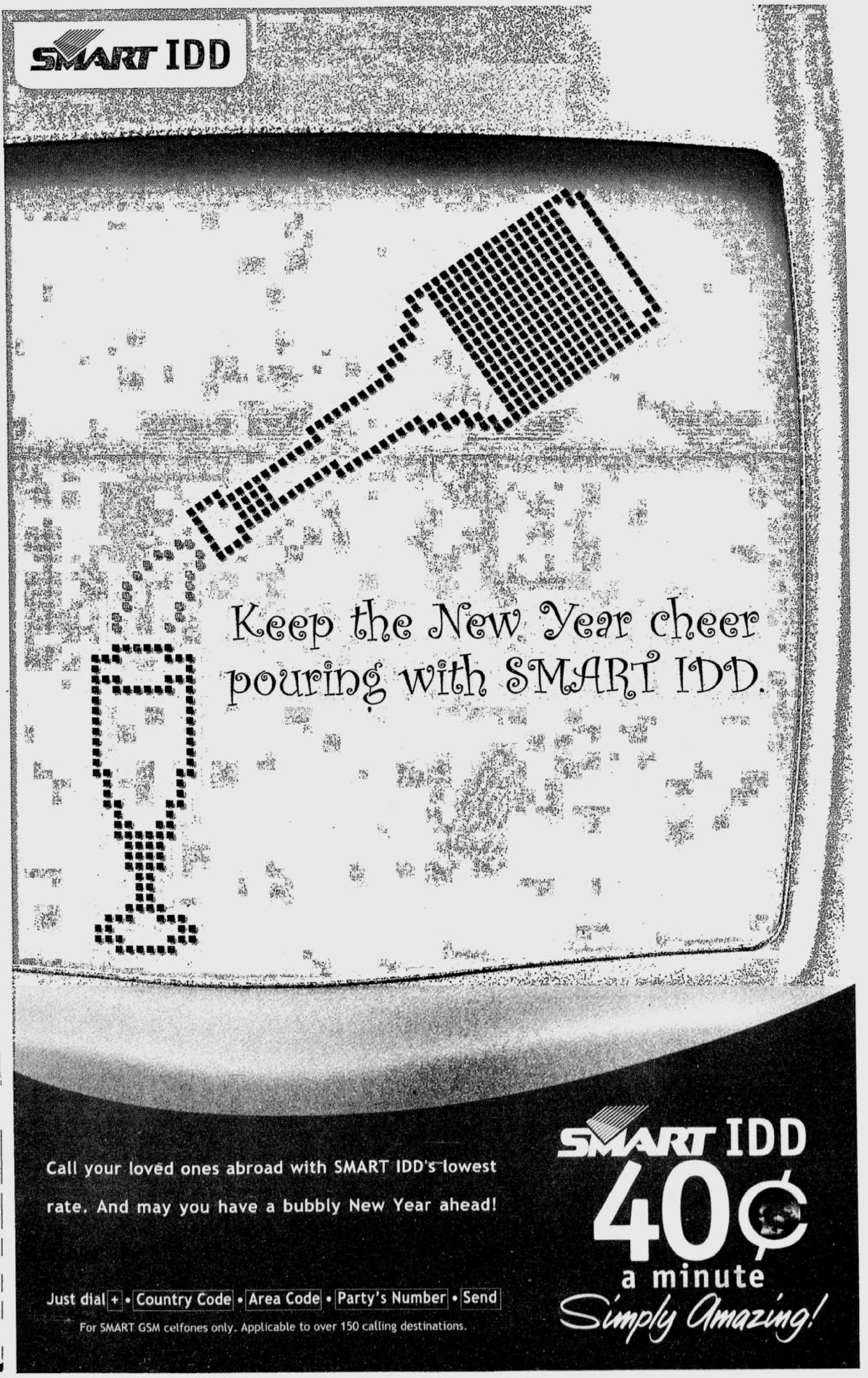

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After trade taxes, Makati now wants to raise parking rates

By Alcuin Papa

FIRST, they increased real estate taxes. Now, Makati city officials want to raise business taxes and parking fees.

The Makati government's parking authority has already increased the fees which motorists pay to park their cars in the city.

But the proposal to raise the city's business taxes went through rough sailing when city businessmen stepped up and denounced the planned increase.

City officials are now saying it will either keep the present business tax rates or defer the proposed adjustment.

City Secretary Rogelio Marasigan said the Makati city government will hold additional public hearings this month on a proposed ordinance that will increase business tax rates in the city.

Marasigan said the additional hearings are intended to allow business groups and other sectors to air their views on the ordinance, now pending before the city council.

"Business tax rates in Makati have remained at the level of a municipality even after the community—considered the country's financial and commercial district—became a city in 1995," Marasigan said.

Marasigan said the city council intends to sit down with the different groups and work out an "acceptable solution" to the issue.

In the first public hearings on Dec. 20 and 21, bankers and other sectors voiced their strong opposition to the proposed increases, saying they might as well transfer their base of operations to other municipalities with lower business tax rates such as Muntinlupa.

Representatives of the Bankers Association of the Philippines who attended the public hearings also pointed out that it is "inopportune" to raise business tax rates now, while the country's economy is in a "downturn."

If the proposed ordinance is passed, the BAP said Makati will have the second highest business tax rate among the 17 cities and municipalities in Metro Manila.

The City of Manila has the biggest business tax rate.

But Marasigan said even with the proposed increases, Makati's business tax rates "will remain competitive with other cities in Metro Manila."

On Jan. 2, The Makati Parking Authority (Mapa) implemented a 30-percent hike on parking fees.

But Marasigan said the city government will look into the decision of the Mapa to raise the rates.

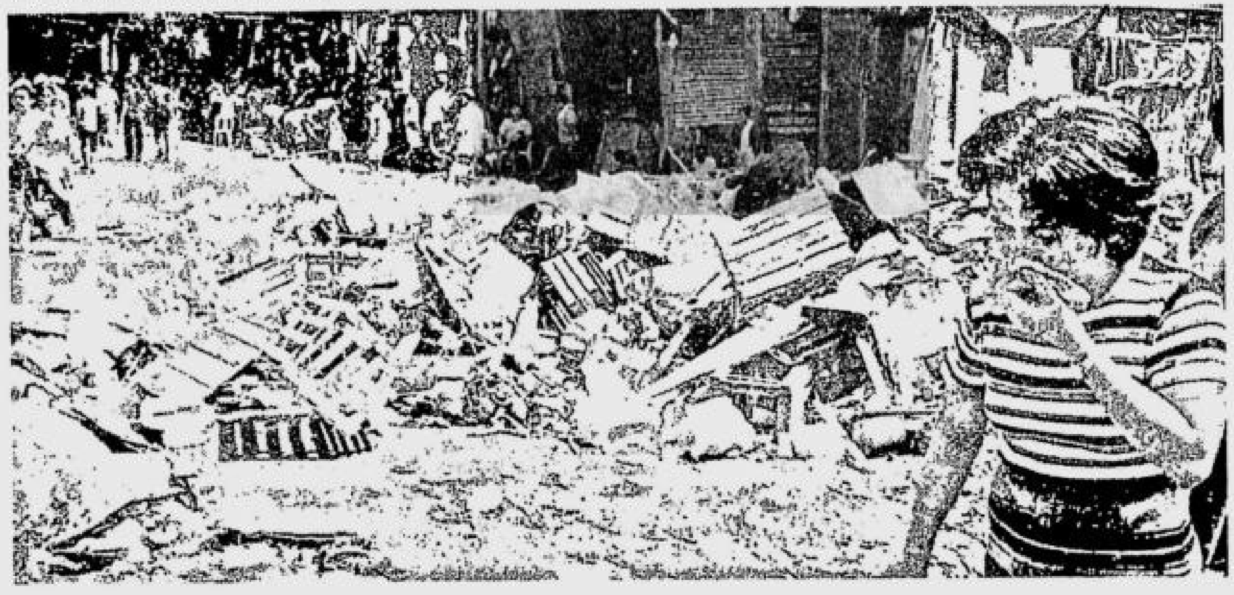
Parking fees for the first two hours were raised from P30 to P40. Fees for the succeeding hours were raised from P40 to P50. Motorcycles will be charged P10 per hour, up from P5.

Lite Francisco, Mapa staff assistant, confirmed that the agency imposed the parking fee increases without prior public consultation.

The Mapa is a private organization composed of several companies like the Makati Commercial Estates Association and Ayala Land Inc. Mapa maintains and regulates parking conditions of the commercial business district.

City officials have said the increase will add to the burden of motorists, who now have to contend with the increased toll rates at the South Luzon Expressway.

AS Makati officials announced they were hiking the fees which motorists have to pay to park on their pristine streets (above), Manila officials are gung-ho on cleaning up the soiled and congested thoroughfares leading to Divisoria (below).



Atienza damns TRO, cleans up Divisoria

By Jerome Aning

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza may be courting a contempt charge when he shrugged off a temporary restraining order issued by a city regional trial court yesterday and ordered the clearing up of access routes to Divisoria.

"Legal gobbledygook" was how Atienza described the lawsuit filed by the United Vendors Association and the corresponding TRO issued on Dec. 20 by Judge Wilfredo Reyes of Manila RTC Branch 36.

"This is the kind of judicial malpractice that hampers development and good government," the mayor said. "They (illegal vendors) can do what they want but we will continue to implement the law, which states, among others, that streets and sidewalks are beyond the commerce of man."

Atienza, City Hall officials and Western Police District operatives drove away vendors and dismantled stalls that were illegally blocking Juan Luna and Ilaya streets in Divisoria.

The mayor was accompanied by Rafael Borromeo, head of the city's department of public certificates, Superintendents Juanito de Guzman and Bernardo Diaz of WPD Stations 11 and 2, and barangay authorities.

Yesterday morning's street and sidewalk clearing operation also covered nearby Chinatown in Binondo.

City officials maintain that Juan Luna and Ilaya have to remain clear of obstructions. Blocking the two roads will cause heavy traffic congestion, which is detrimental to legitimate traders and vendors operating in Divisoria.

The TRO barred Atienza, the Manila Hawkers Committee led by Adil Khan and Station 11 commander Supt. Juanito de Guzman from removing, dismantling and hauling the stalls of illegal vendors operating on Ilaya.

The petition for the TRO was filed before the court by the UVA under Joel Bangit.

City Legal Officer Melchor Monsod said the city government will contest the validity of the TRO, pointing out that the court "may have exceeded its jurisdiction."

"In the order, the court spoke of an "authorized vending area" on Ilaya Street (but) there is no such thing on the said street," Monsod said. "In issuing the TRO, the court, in effect, permitted illegal vendors to ply their trade on the said street."

Atienza earlier said vendors may transfer to the side streets and even get financial assistance to help them rebuild their stalls. Few vendors, however, availed of the program.

The mayor had tagged "syndicates" as behind illegal vendors' resistance to his proposal. He said the "syndicates" do not want to lose profits from their extortion activities, particularly the "rent" they are collecting from illegal vendors.

It's hello Destiny, goodbye Sky

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MOST, if not all, of my friends who subscribe to cable television have been asking me one and the same question. They unanimously wonder why I have to stick it out with my current provider.

I feel uneasy. Naturally.

They've been teasing me about my undying faith.

It seems I'm the only one who has stuck it out with SkyCable.

No Star Sports, no Star Movies, no National Geographic , yes, no ESPN to provide us the bulk of international sports action.

So why have I not joined the exodus?

Friends out there in the Alabang area have long switched to Parañaque Cable.

Colleagues in San Juan now subscribe to Global.

Here in the office, our sports ed, Al Mendoza, claims he has been aptly rewarded since linking up with Destiny.

They all ask: What has SkyCable got that other cable providers don't have?

* * *

Let me confess. I myself had felt cheated, terribly shortchanged, after Sky lost the channels that provided me my wholesome ration of international sports events.

I had been all set to mutiny, well ahead of my friends and neighbors.

For the record, Destiny has become the favorite alternative in our side of the Pasig in Mandaluyong.

But I decided to stick it out with Sky for sentimental reasons.

You probably don't know this but we're neighbors with SkyCable.

We are both located on the same block. So, whenever the food delivery boy would ask about our address, we simply use the SkyCable compound in Barangay Vergara, Mandaluyong as reference point.

We all find it very convenient. "Just follow the street arrows leading to SkyCable," I would say, "then look for us."

Not a single food delivery man has missed our house, thanks to SkyCable, our neighbor.

* * *

Sky, of course, has made things very tough for cable subscribers, mainly the sports fans whose main reason for using cable are the NBA games.

I've missed many main games already which I could have savored early in the morning.

In fact, I felt like a poor orphan when Michael Jordan played his first comeback game last year at the Madison Square Garden.

It was irreparable. Imagine failing to watch a magical Muhammad Ali outing at the height of his reign as The Greatest.

You see, just like in the reign of Ali, the world also stopped to see how much was left of the Jordan fire and magic during his Second Comeback last year.

Well, for staying faithful to Sky, I suffered the fate of an outsider.

I was willing to beg or borrow just to have a glimpse of that comeback game.

I ended up suffering in silence.

I even found myself avoiding neighbors who next gathered to discuss, very excitedly, the Jordan comeback and subsequent NBA games as carried on ESPN.

* * *

Listen. All the while, I prayed that SkyCable would finally find a solution and be able to provide its clients wholesome sports fare.

I had hoped Sky would soon make up for its shortcomings.

Remember how the giant Lopez-owned cable company came up with a series of loud advertisements to explain that it's still the finest choice?

SkyCable next started shooting blanks but I just closed my eyes.

SkyCable went to town by proclaiming it had cornered a new deal that would allow it to carry live NBA games again.

Despite SkyCable claims, it's very clear that the bulk of major NBA games are carried live over ESPN and Star Sports, which have both been pulled out from the Lopez-owned cable provider.

Sky, through its Solar channel, has been reduced to an insignificant kibitzer as far as NBA coverage is concerned.

* * *

For weeks, I tried to think that SkyCable was forced to make some big, empty claims in order to assuage the hurt felt by the general public following that Jordan-less NBA season opening.

But, hey, upon waking up yesterday, I chanced upon this announcement that ESPN would carry the games in the World Pool League 2001 in Poland.

Later, there would be the Mosconi Cup Finals also on ESPN. And later in the evening, Star Sports would feature World Class Championship boxing, not to mention English Premier Football League, Asian Bowling Tour highlights, Tiger5s 2001 highlights, all on Star Sports.

That World Pool League 2001, by the way, was the same tournament won by our Efren "Bata" Reyes, a feat that helped land the Magician in the pages of Time Magazine.

Maybe it was the thought of missing Bata's magic.

Maybe it was the sickening lack of Air Jordan games.

Maybe it was the dishonesty, the false claims.

Yes, just like most friends and neighbors, I have decided to stop playing the sentimental fool.

I have decided to part ways with SkyCable which, at the rate it's being deserted by subscribers, could next be moving out of our neighborhood.

The food delivery boy could soon be losing his way to our place again.

We could miss some hot meals. But I've decided to lead the life of a fulfilled sports spectator. Corny, but this is my Destiny.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, January 4, 2002
Week Before Epiphany

1st Reading: **1 Jn 3:7-10**
Gospel: **Jn 1:35-42**

John was at Bethany across the Jordan with two of his disciples. As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and said, "There is the Lamb of God." On hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. He turned and saw them following, and he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They answered, "Rabbi (which means *Master*), where are you staying?" Jesus said, "Come and see." So they went and saw where he stayed and spent the rest of that day with him. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard what John had said and followed Jesus. Early the next morning he found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means *the Christ*), and he brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon, son of John, but you shall be called Cephas" (which means *Rock*).

Commentary

Opening days of the year are days of grace. The Spirit is at work in us, orientating us for a new year of journeying more closely with Jesus. John the Baptist continues to prepare the way for Jesus, pointing his own disciples away from himself and towards Jesus. They strike up a conversation with Jesus, asking, "Where do you live?" His "Come and see!" is meant for us: "Travel with me, not just for a day, but every day of the year." Get ready, for Jesus is going to look steadily at us, revealing to us more deeply our true identity.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cnl.net; Websites:http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Conspiracy—Conspiracy is revealed by the acts before, during and after the commission of the crime which indicate joint purpose, concerted action and concurrence of sentiments. In innumerable cases, the Court has held that direct proof is not essential, because conspiracy may be equably inferred from the acts of the accused disclosing their joint purpose and design. In the instant case, however, nothing less than direct proof of a previous agreement to kill the victim, plus an eyewitness account of how the conspirators effected their plan, was submitted into evidence but disregarded by the trial court. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Gonzaga-Reyes, Third Division, People v. Uganap, G.R. No. 130605, June 19, 2001]

Digest by R.B Vera

Manhunt on for Cainta shooter

By Nelson Flores

POLICE have filed murder charges against a Land Transportation Office employee who shot dead his co-worker in Cainta, Rizal last month.

The Cainta Municipal Police also launched a manhunt against suspect Dante Tan, who escaped after gunning down LTO license officer Lucio Lubi on Dec. 20.

Police believed Tan is hiding somewhere in northern Metro Manila.

Tan was charged with murder before the Rizal Provincial Prosecutors Office after authorities determined that he was the one who shot and killed Lubi, a native of Batangas, during a Christmas party for workers of the LTO branch in Cainta.

Investigator SPO3 Conrado Albano said that during the party, Tan stood up from his seat to watch an ongoing parlor game. Unknown to Tan, someone pulled the chair from under him.

Albano said that when the suspect tried to sit down after watching the game, he fell on the ground, eliciting wild laughter from the crowd. The suspect immediately blamed Lubi for the embarrassing episode and the two started to argue.

Upset, Tan went to his office, took out his .9-mm semi-automatic pistol, went right back to the party and shot the victim in the leg, Albano said. Lubi begged for mercy, but the suspect fired twice hitting the victim in the chest and arm.

Police said Tan escaped on board a Toyota vehicle (DAP 888) with his family. Lubi died on the way to the Ryan Anthony Hospital.

NBI to check Paoctf roster . . .

(From page A17)

Aside from Colonel Torres, the NBI has charged before the justice department suspects Hadji Onos, alias Mokles, a Moro Islamic Liberation Front member who is an explosive and demolition expert; Sammy Arinday, Amir Dimaampo, Salvin Camama, Ibrahim Guindolongan, Roberto Onyot, and Rogelio Cagadas.

Meneses said the bureau has three witnesses who helped the suspects make the bombs in a room at a Quiapo lodge. The plot was hatched in November 2000 and the suspects were allegedly offered P20,000 each.

But Meneses said the culprits were apparently not paid in full and three of the suspects turned themselves in and became state witnesses. He said the three men may be included in the Witness Protection Program.

Meneses said the suspects acted as mercenaries for another group, which wanted to destabilize the Estrada administration.

The bombing at the Blumentritt Light Rail Transit station left 11 dead and 54 people injured, Wycoco said.

Aside from the LRT, explosives were also planted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, near the Dusit Hotel in Makati, in an Edsan bus in Cubao, and at Plaza Ferguson in front of the US Embassy.

GOCCs . . .

(From page A17)

"Quezon City is so much bigger than most, if not all, cities in Metro Manila, yet it is currently the most heavily indebted, most financially distressed local government unit," Endriga admitted.

This, he added, prompted the city government to hold an auction, instead of giving tax amnesty.

"We think that an auction of properties with unpaid taxes will be the most effective way to compel taxpayers to pay their obligations to the government," Endriga said. "Giving tax amnesty only encourages them not to pay on time."

The treasurer also called on the public to participate in the auction, saying it will be a great chance to buy properties at a cheap price.

He said the bidding will start at the amount of unpaid taxes, not the market value of the auctioned property.

But Endriga said property owners will still be given a year to redeem their properties before the rights are transferred to the winning bidder.

Real estate owners who fail to pay their taxes will not be prohibited from bidding for their own properties in the auction, he added.

Senators look . . .

(From page A17)

passing on to the public the cost of upgrading facilities and services.

The TRB announced in an unsigned advisory on Dec. 21 that the Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. (CMMTC), which operates the Southern Luzon Tollways (SLT) and the Skyway, will start collecting new fees starting Jan. 1 this year until June 30, when another round of toll fee increases is scheduled.

A taxpayer's suit seeking the issuance of a temporary restraining order has been filed by lawyer Ceferino Padua before the Supreme Court.

In his petition, Padua asked the high court to stop the Toll Regulatory Board from implementing the new increased toll rates at the South and North Luzon expressways, and the Skyways. He said that the new rates "smack of large-scale swindling of motorists."

Congress is also conducting an inquiry on the toll rate increases after Rep. Ed Zialcita of Parañaque voiced his opposition to the increases last month. Zialcita said Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp. (CMMTC), the company that built the Skyway system in cooperation with the government, and the Toll Regulatory Board, the government office which regulates the SLEX, imposed the increases during the holidays when no one could question it before a court.

"This is highway robbery," Junia told the INQUIRER. "In fact, they (Citra and TRB) have upgraded it to expressway robbery. The toll hike, is a major injustice. This is bad."

Camino, 68

FLORENCIO Q. Camino, widower of Erlinda C. Camino who passed away on Nov. 11, died on New Year's Day of cardiac arrest.

He would have turned 69 yesterday.

He is survived by children Cliff, Cheryl, Cyndi and son-in-law Bal, and Eric; grandchildren Cyril and Cedric; and brothers Eddie, Cesar, Pol, Freddie and Louie.

His remains lie at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel on Sucat Road in Sucat, Parañaque.

The remains will be cremated tomorrow morning at the Manila Memorial Park, also in Sucat.

‘Lord of the Rings’ better than ‘Harry Potter

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

HARRY Potter is far from falling from his Nimbus 2000 broomstick. But after **Peter Jackson**’s “Lord of the Rings” made a stratospheric opening day gross in the United States, the success of “Harry Potter” was immediately eclipsed.

And it turns out a young hobbit named **Frodo Baggins** has more “friends” than a boy wizard.

“Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring” is the first in the trilogy of **J.R.R. Tolkien**. Although the two sequels have also been completed, the first one will be released in Manila only today.

You have to wait till next December (in the United States) and January here for the second film, and the next December after that for the third one.

I’ll leave the film review to our resident reviewer, **Ruben Cruz Jr.**, who can certainly gauge whether Jackson has given justice to Tolkien’s work. But I’ve seen the premiere of “Lord of the Rings” with my writer-friends at the Glorietta a week before Christmas. Early last month, I also saw “Harry Potter,” so I couldn’t help but compare the two big screen masterpieces.

While “Harry Potter” director **Chris Columbus** managed to create onscrean the magic of **J.K. Rowling**’s literary work, it appears that Jackson has churned out a more amazing epic-adventure.

In “Harry Potter,” you only see magic, but “Lord of the Rings” has much more than that. It has magic, suspense, action, drama and romance. It clearly depicts the passion of the filmmaker to bring to cinematic life a popular masterpiece, written by a literary icon more than five decades ago.

“Lord of the Rings is a story of good against evil, the power of friendship and individual courage, and the heroic quest to pave the way for the emergence of mankind.

The film has real emotion, real terror and a tactile sense of evil which makes you shudder. How I hated the villain Sauron when the hobbit Frodo gets hurt or when he tries to counter the powers of Gandalf the wizard (played by Sir **Ian McKellen**).

Elijah Wood as Frodo Baggins inherits the powerful ring and steps into legend. He must journey to the Mount of Doom to destroy the ring before Sauron gets hold of it, and uses it to snuff out the light of civilization and cover the world in darkness.

With the help of a loyal fellowship—composed of hobbits Sam (**Sean Astin**), Merry (**Dominic Monaghan**) and Pippin (**Billy Boyd**), Gimli the Dwarf (**John Rhys-Davies**) and humans Aragorn (**Viggo Mortensen**) and Boromir (**Sean Bean**)—and with the guidance of Gandalf and elves Arwen (**Liv Tyler**), Galadriel (**Cate Blanchett**) and Elrond (**Hugo Weaving**), Frodo dauntlessly went on his journey.

The fact that Jackson’s trilogy represents an unprecedented undertaking—three films made simultaneously over a year and a half of production—makes it an even more impressive feat for “Lord of the Rings.”

My friends and I were awed at how Tolkien’s Middle Earth was transformed by production designer **Richard Taylor** into a magical location that is Rivendell (using a breathtaking New Zealand locale as backdrop).

AS the young hobbit Froddo Baggins, Elijah Wood turns out to be more popular than a boy wizard.

Until this film, Tolkien’s mythical Middle Earth only existed in the imaginations of his readers and in the wondrously detailed, yet limited illustrations on the novels.

The hobbit holes of Hobbiton, the sylvan glades of the elf refuge Rivendell, the smoky innards of the Pony Inn and the networks of underground caverns in the mines of Moria come palpably to life onscreen. And everything, including the stirring musical score, is simply spellbinding, you wouldn’t know you’ve watched a three-hour film.

Taylor painted Tolkien’s palette as much as possible across the film. You cannot possibly tell that the elves of Middle Earth are simply the wonders of digital technology, as the actors had to be simply blue-screened or composited into segmented miniature designs.

It was also a delight to see how the hobbits stand side by side with the humans. The computer technique of how Frodo and his friends were made to look diminutive, brings out a very natural effect on the big screen.

The plot and the characters of “Lord of the Rings” are all blown away by the sheer scale of realism of the sets, makeup and special effects.

You certainly wouldn’t want to miss this celluloid masterpiece.

Nora, Regine join Kuh

POP diva Kuh Ledesma will be joined by two special guests in her concert series, “On Higher Ground,” at Music Museum.

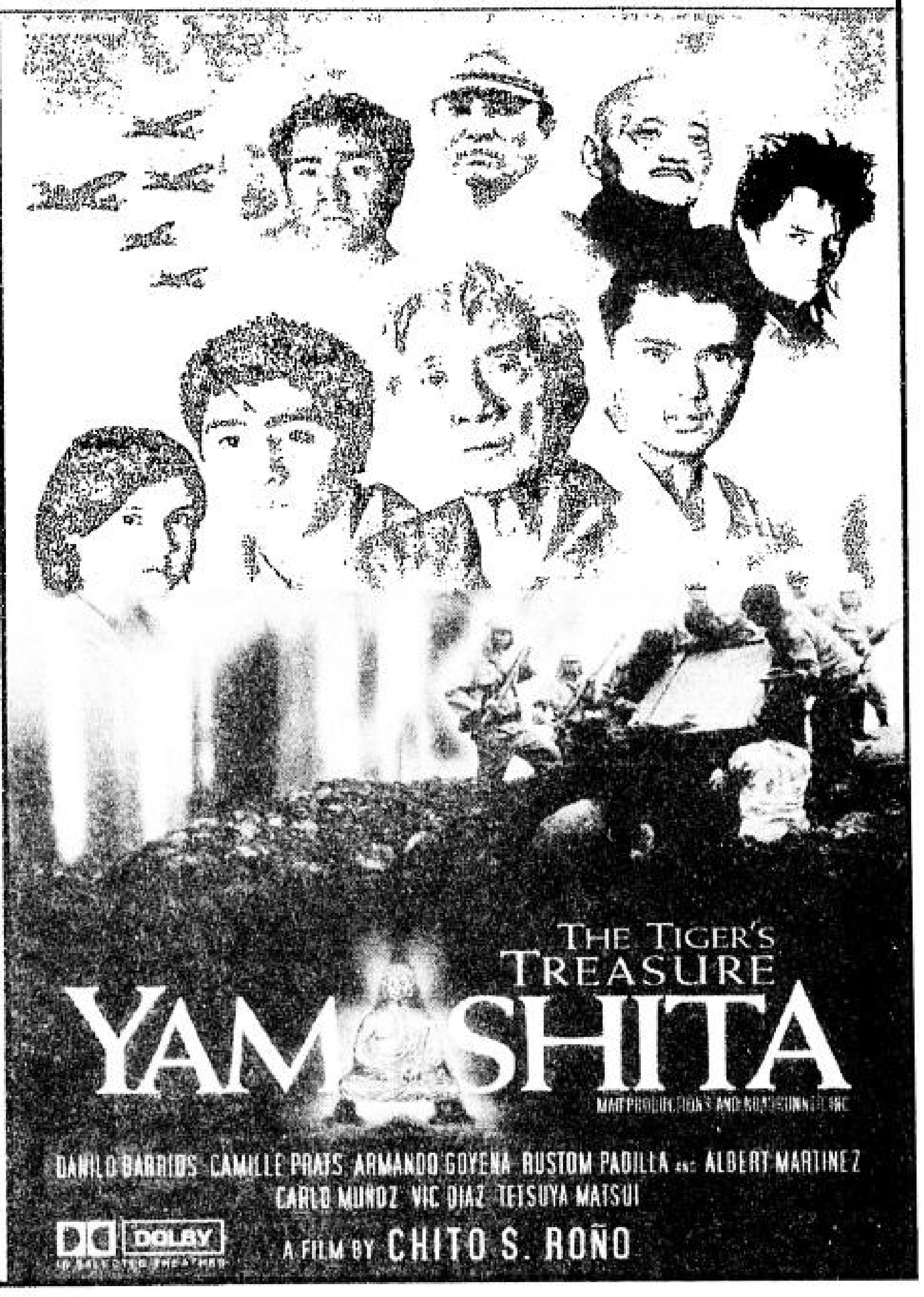
Regine Velasquez shares the stage with Kuh tonight, while superstar Nora Aunor will perform with Kuh tomorrow night.

Kuh’s daughter, Isabella, will also guest on both nights.

For tickets, call Music Museum at 721-0635 or Ticket World at 891-5610 or Good News Café at 551-7251 to 55.

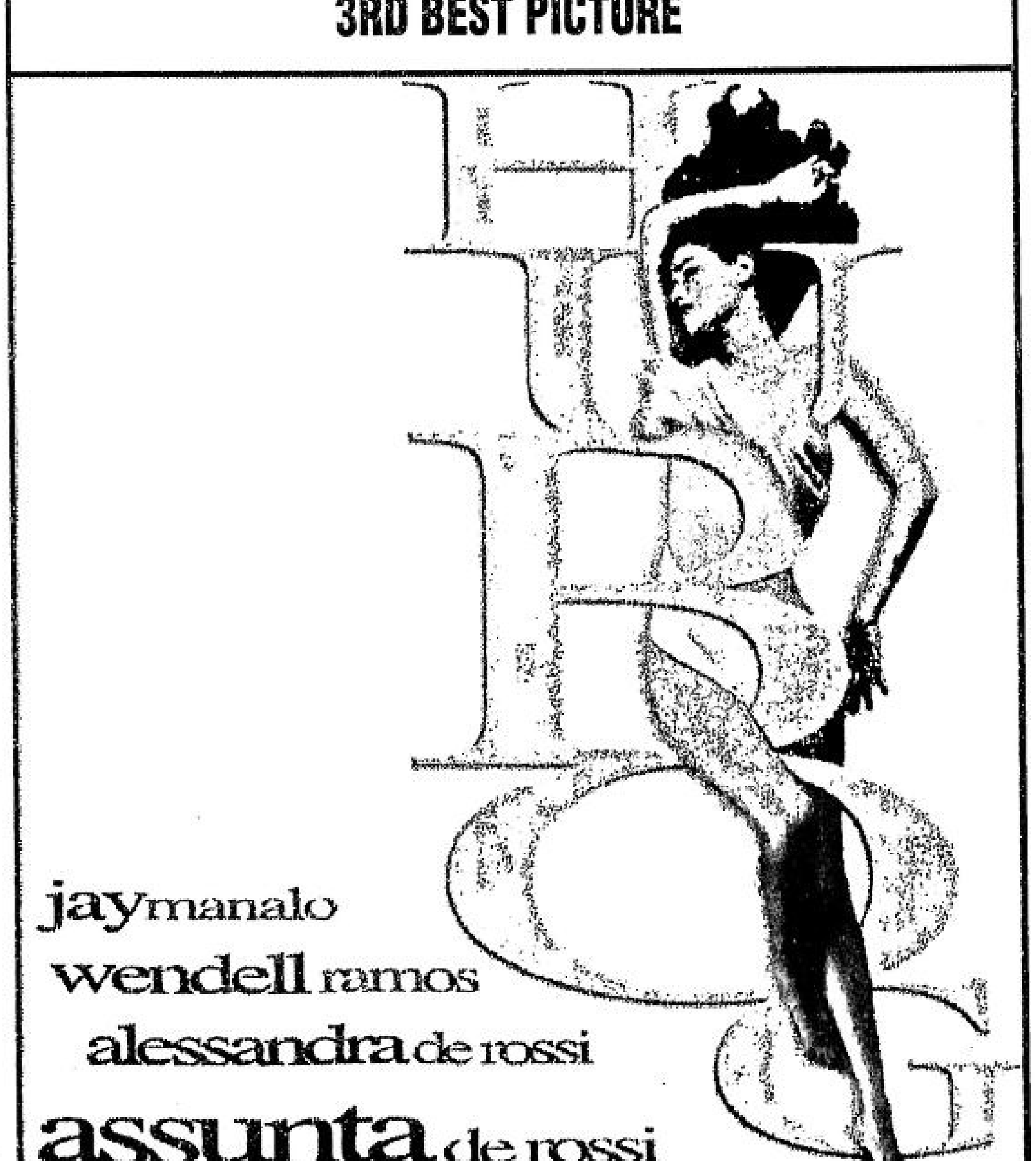
SECOND WEEK !!!
BOX OFFICE NA, BEST PICTURE PA
- BEST PICTURE
- BEST DIRECTOR - CHITO ROÑO
- BEST SCREENPLAY - ROY IGLESIAS
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY - NEIL DAZA
- BEST STORY - ROSELLE MONTEVERDE & ROY IGLESIAS
- BEST PRODUCTION DESIGNER - FERNAN SANTIAGO & MAYPAGLINAWAN
- BEST MAKE-UP - WARREN MUNAR
- BEST VISUAL EFFECTS-ROAD RUNNER
- BEST SOUND - MICHAEL IDIOMA I BEST FLOAT

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2001
MTRCB RATING G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

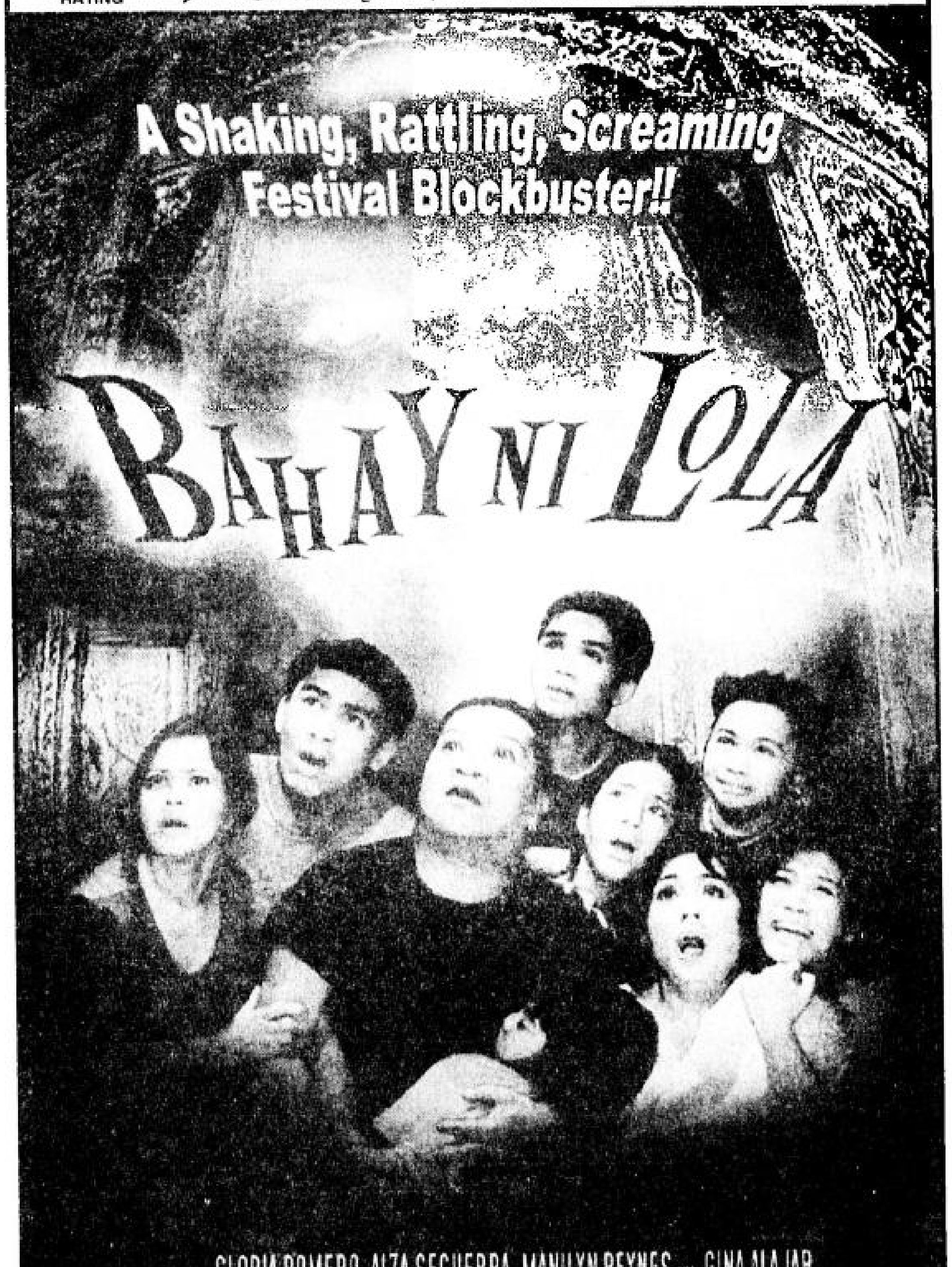

THE TIGER'S TREASURE
YAMASHITA
DANILO BARRIOS CAMILLE PRATS ARMANDO GOYENA RUSTOM PADILLA and ALBERT MARTINEZ
CARLO MUÑOZ VIC DIAZ TETSUYA MATSUI
DOLBY
A FILM BY CHITO S. ROÑO

SECOND WEEK !!!
OFFICIAL ENTRY
TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2001
MTRCB RATING R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted

BEST ACTRESS—ASSUNTA de ROSSI
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS—ALESSANDRA de ROSSI
3RD BEST PICTURE



SECOND WEEK !!!
OFFICIAL ENTRY
TO THE METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2001
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED


A Shaking, Rattling, Screaming Festival Blockbuster!!
BAHAY NI LOLA
starring GLORIA ROMERO AIZA SEGUERRA MANILYN REYNES and GINA ALAJAR
JAMES BLANCO MAYBELYN DELA CRUZ MAXENE MAGALONA MIKO SOTTO ISABELLA DE LEON with ALAN K
JOSE JAVIER REYES
REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC.
zed

How to 'bank' . . .

(From page A21)

That would give them a huge pot at the end of the show!

But that would be risky, because both the questions and the contestants are a pretty uneven bunch, and mistakes can be made anytime, as a result.

So, the "four consecutive correct answers" banking system seems to be mare realistic. Less than that would mean minimal winnings, so the "bank after four" option appears to be the best.

What do you think, dear reader?

---

according to Associate[illegible] Golden Jubilarian

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2	ON THE LINE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	BAHAY NI LOLA	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	YAMASHITA	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	ON THE LINE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	GLASS HOUSE	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BAGONG BUWAN	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	CHUNHYANG	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	ON THE LINE	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	WEEKEND WITH POPS Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	THE LORD OF THE RINGS THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	ON THE LINE	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	BAGONG BUWAN	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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2	LORD OF THE RING
3	GLASS HOUSE
4	YAMASHITA
5	LORD OF THE RING
6	ON THE LINE
7	BATANG LANSANGAN
8	BAHAY NI LOLA
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

ERMITA
536-7609 TO 12

1	LORD OF THE RING
2	YAMASHITA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	GLASS HOUSE
5	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
6	LORD OF THE RING
7	ON THE LINE

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1	HUBOG
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	LORD OF THE RING
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
8	BAHAY NI LOLA

NOVALICHES
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1	LORD OF THE RING
2	LORD OF THE RING
3	ON THE LINE
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAHAY NI LOLA
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	BATANG LANSANGAN
8	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

IMUS
(046) 471-8190

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2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	YAMASHITA
4	ON THE LINE
5	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
6	BATANG LANSANGAN

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3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	THE SCORE
5	ROCKSTAR
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3 (DTS)	ON THE LINE
4 GOLD (DTS)	YAMASHITA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	ON THE LINE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	BAGONG BUWAN
8	KAHIT SAAN ENKUWENTRO
9	BAHAY NI LOLA
10	HUBOG

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4	
5	
6 (DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

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2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN

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2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	HUBOG

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
6	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
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1	LORD OF THE RING

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1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	BAHAY NI LOLA

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2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Spring
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1	BATANG LANSANGAN
A	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

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2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BAHAY NI LOLA

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3	RESERVE
4	HUBOG
5	YAMASHITA
6	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
7 (DTS)	ON THE LINE
8 (SDDS)	GLASS HOUSE
9 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS

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2	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

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2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	YAMASHITA
6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
7 (DTS)	ON THE LINE
8	BATANG LANSANGAN
9	HUBOG

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2	HUBOG
3	YAMASHITA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
7 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	BATANG LANSANGAN

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2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	HUBOG
4	YAMASHITA
5 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS

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2	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	YAMASHITA

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2	YAMASHITA
3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
4	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
5	BAHAY NI LOLA

New Divisoria Mall
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tel 244.4619

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
4	CLOSED
5	CLOSED
6	HUBOG

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
2	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
3	

Berma
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1	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
2	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

CitiMall
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3 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

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2 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
4	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

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2 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
3 (DTS)	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4	BAGONG BUWAN

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1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	HUBOG
2	TATARIN
3 (DOLBY)	BAHAY NI LOLA
4 (DTS)	YAMASHITA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
3	YAMASHITA
4 (DTS)	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY)	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS)	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
4	4 FATHERS
5	BAGONG BUWAN

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1	
2	
3	

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2	
3	

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1	
2	
3	

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

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2	BAGONG BUWAN
3	4 FATHERS

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	BAGONG BUWAN
2 (DTS)	BRO KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	HUBOG
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BRO KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	
2	
3	
4	

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY DIG)	YAMASHITA
2	
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4 (DTS D)	BAHAY NI LOLA

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ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BAGONG BUWAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	HUBOG
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	ON THE LINE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	BRO. KAHIT SAANG ENGKWENTRO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	LORD OF THE RINGS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	DOS EKIS / WILD SIDE
ODEON	LORD OF THE RINGS
ODEON-2	HUBOG
ROBEN	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	KNIGHT'S TAIL / THE BODY

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
REMAR	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
REMAR-2	HUBOG

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	MGA BATANG LANSANGAN
B	BRO. KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
C	HUBOG

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-2	HUBOG
CINEMA-3	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DI KITA MA-REACH
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TATARIN
CINEMA-6	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-7	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-8	HUBOG
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BAHAY NI LOLA
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	YAMASHITA
CINEMA-12	TATARIN
CINEMA-14	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA-15	FOUR FATHERS

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

CINEMA-1	GLASS HOUSE
CINEMA-2	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-3	THE LORD OF THE RINGS
CINEMA-4	ON THE LINE
CINEMA-5	BAGONG BUWAN
CINEMA 6	THE LORD OF THE RINGS

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	HUBOG
8	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO

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1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	HUBOG
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
5	LORD OF THE RINGS
6	BATANG LANSANGAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	ON THE LINE
9	YAMASHITA
10	TATARIN

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1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	HUBOG
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	LORD OF THE RINGS
5	YAMASHITA
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	HARRY POTTER
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	TATARIN
11	ON THE LINE
12	BATANG LANSANGAN

SM CITY MANILA
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1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	ON THE LINE
5	YAMASHITA
6	LORD OF THE RINGS
7	HUBOG
8	BATANG LANSANGAN
9	LORD OF THE RINGS
10	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
11	TATARIN
12	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM MEGAMALL
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1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	ON THE LINE
5	YAMASHITA
6	TATARIN
7	HUBOG
8	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
9	BAGONG BUWAN
10	LORD OF THE RINGS
11	BATANG LANSANGAN
12	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM TUTUBAN
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1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	BATANG LANSANGAN

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9295452

1	BAHAY NI LOLA
2	GLASS HOUSE
3	BAGONG BUWAN
4	YAMASHITA
5	ON THE LINE
6	BAGONG BUWAN
7	LORD OF THE RINGS
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
10	HUBOG
11	BATANG LANSANGAN
12	TATARIN

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1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	BAHAY NI LOLA
5	TATARIN
6	HUBOG
7	BAGONG BUWAN
8	LORD OF THE RINGS
9	YAMASHITA
10	BATANG LANSANGAN

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1	KAHIT SAAN ENGKWENTRO
2	TATARIN
3	LORD OF THE RINGS

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3	BAHAY NI LOLA
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	ON THE LINE
6	HUBOG
7	4 FATHERS

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1	HUBOG
2	CLOSED
3	SUMMER CATCH
4	YAMASHITA
5	BAGONG BUWAN
6	BAHAY NI LOLA
7	CLOSED
8	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

SM PAMPANGA
7128015

1	ON THE LINE
2	YAMASHITA
3	TATARIN
4	BATANG LANSANGAN
5	HUBOG
6	BAHAY NI LOLA

SM SUCAT
8204075

1	BAGONG BUWAN
2	ON THE LINE
3	LORD OF THE RINGS
4	YAMASHITA

SM DAVAO

1	YAMASHITA
2	BAHAY NI LOLA
3	ON THE LINE
4	BAGONG BUWAN
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	SUMMER CATCH

dts DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

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How to 'bank' on 'The Weakest Link'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

EDU Manzano, the quizmaster on "The Weakest Link," keeps complaining that contestants on the show simply don't know how to "bank" their winnings.

Just last week, he pointed out that a particular episode's contestants had gotten seven correct answers in a row but had failed to win big money because they either forgot to bank, or banked too soon.

How *should* contestants on "The Weakest Link" more productively bank their winnings to end up with a bigger pile of cash at the end of the show?

We've studied the various banking factors and options available to the contestants, and have come up with these observations and recommendations:

First, many contestants forget to bank because they're simply too nervous, or too focused on coming up with correct answers to the questions Edu asks in rapid-fire fashion.

Second, some contestants don't trust the intelligence of their colleagues, and think they're going to make a mistake. So, they tend to bank after only a couple of correct answers, to make sure that they at least have something in the bank. As a result, they miss out on the prize-doubling "escalation" factor that the higher banking levels make possible.

So, study the options: The banking levels rise from P1,000 to P2,000, to P5,000, to P10,000, to P20,000, to P50,000, to P80,000. Obviously, if you hold off until the seventh consecutive correct answer, you can win a lot more than if you keep banking three sets of P2,000 or P5,000 each.

Therefore, the key is to hold off—but seven consecutive answers aren't easy to achieve, so at what lower level should contestants more realistically (and still productively) bank their winnings.

After watching many groups of contestants at play, we have noted that four consecutive answers aren't that difficult to achieve, so if contestants hold off until after they get four questions right, they can win P10,000 per round-robin series of questions. If they can get four or five series per round, they can win P40,000 or P50,000 per round—much higher than the norm thus far.

So, if contestants have it in them to be more daring, they can hold off until after the fifth consecutive correct answer, and win P20,000 per round-robin series—or a really cool P80,000 or P100,000 per round.

HOW/ A20

'Bagong Buwan' . . .

(From page A22)

I loved the fact that the film highlighted in several instances the ability of Muslims and Catholics to pray separately, yet still united in what they were praying for. Our manner of worship may be different, but our intentions remain the same. I also appreciated the fact that the film gave credit to all the Church has contributed to not only foster peace in the region, but to bring relief goods and aid where it is most needed.

There is no question that Cesar Montano was outstanding, but both **Jericho Rosales** and **Carlo Aquino** were equally effective in their roles. Jericho as the young lieutenant certainly looked convincing in uniform and he was able to fully embody his role.

I'm glad they cast someone as charismatic as him to embody the young military officer. Even if the film is quite sympathetic to our Muslim brothers, the producers in casting Jericho insured that the military was humanized, and the message of duty to country was clear. Carlo's intensity and consistency as Rashid, the young rebel should have at least tied him for best supporting actor with **Ronnie Lazaro**.

To paraphrase Boy Abunda, it is hard to imagine that someone as young as Carlo can summon so much pain and anger in his acting, especially in his eyes.

I must also make special mention of the youngest and oldest members of the cast. **Jiro Manio**, who won best child performer, was innocently precocious without ever being irritating. There was nothing forced in his performance. His *kakulitan* gave the movie its much needed light moments! He wasn't only adorable, he was also very impressive!

Tita Caring (**Caridad Sanchez**) had the most affecting scenes. Her lines were delivered with simplicity that made it easier to absorb their actual depth of meaning. Her death scene was one of the most painful I've ever seen on screen, it weighed so heavily on my heart and really made me cry.

If you haven't seen "Bagong Buwan," you should make the effort. For all those who say that Filipino films are not worth bothering with, this movie will definitely prove you wrong!

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GLASS HOUSE - P 13 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:30	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 1:00, 4:30, 8:00, 11:20	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 10:40, 2:00, 5:30, 9:00
ON THE LINE - GP 11:25, 1:30, 3:35, 5:40, 7:45, 9:50	BAGONG BUWAN - P 13 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00	LORD OF THE RINGS - GP 11:30, 3:00, 6:30, 10:00

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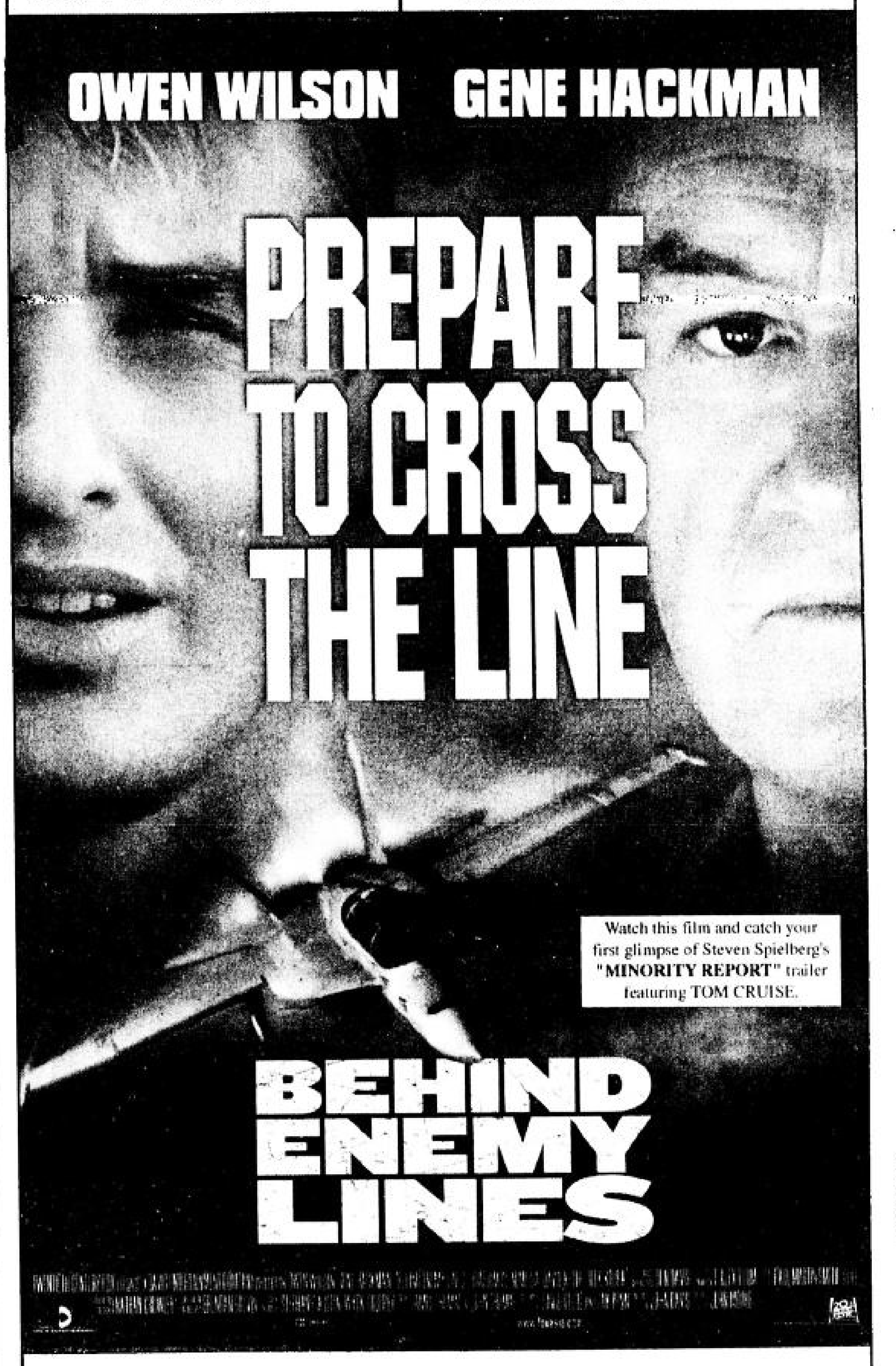
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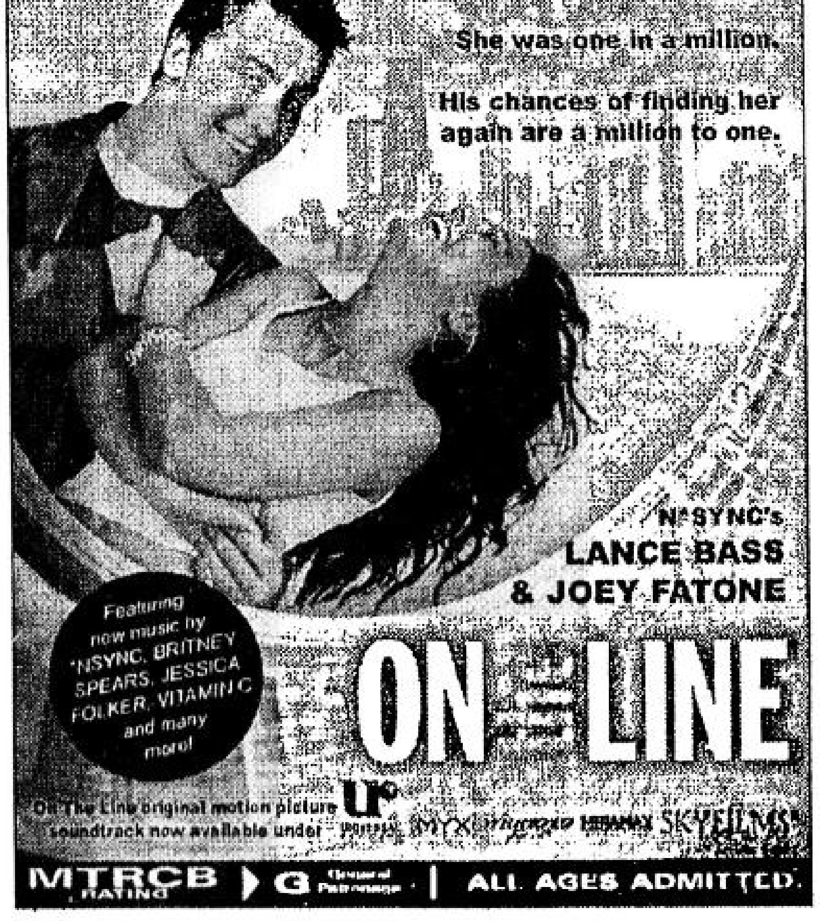
She was one in a million.
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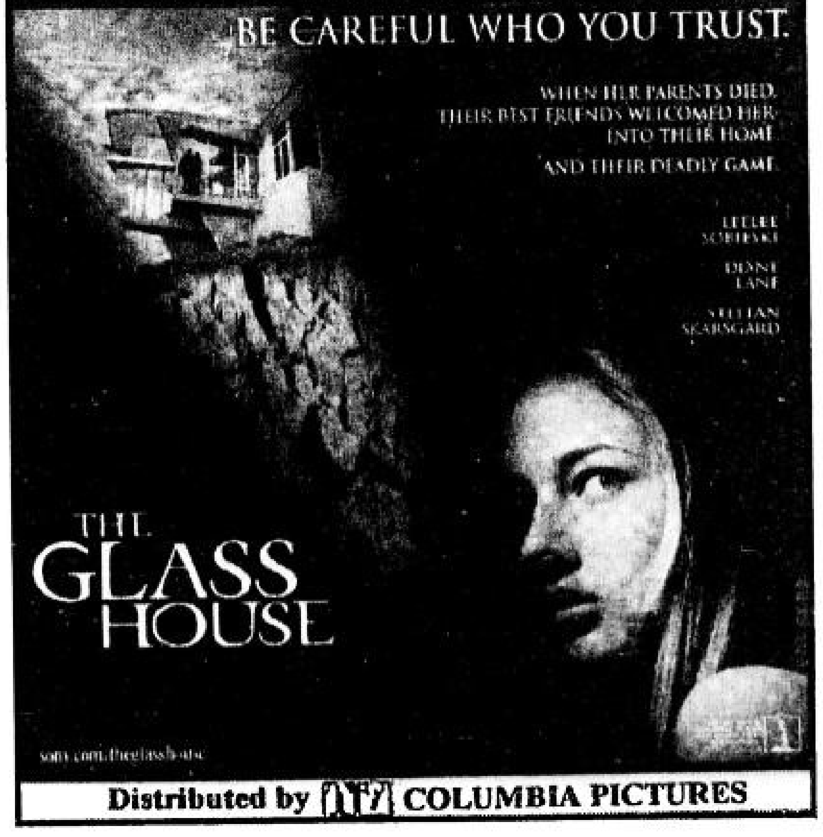
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ENTERTAINMENT

Louie C. Camino, Editor

'Bagong Buwan' of global standards, says my mom

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I HAVEN'T seen "Yamashita." I'm watching it later tonight after submitting this column. There is no doubt in my mind that **Chito Roño** came out with an A-1 film. I have seen "Bagong Buwan," caught it last Sunday with my mom in Rockwell, and it was truly superb.

My mom's last movie viewed in a cinema was "Tanging Yaman," which she saw in Luisita Mall in Tarlac last year. We went to watch "Bagong Buwan" because my mom admires **Marilou Diaz-Abaya**'s films. She was very impressed by Cesar Montano in Rizal and since we were the only ones in our immediate family in town, we decided to have a movie date last Sunday.

The movie was around 2 hours and 20 minutes long. I normally get fidgety when a movie runs longer than 100 minutes, but in this instance I didn't resent the film's length. The story of "Bagong Buwan" held my attention, because it captured my emotions and opened up my intellect.

When my "Buzz" cohost said that after having watched "Bagong Buwan" he understood more what it meant to be a Filipino, I'd initially assumed it was **Boy Abunda**'s gift of hyperbole at work.

After seeing the film, I must agree with Boy's assessment. It made me realize how little I knew or in fact bothered to know about the plight of our fellow Filipinos living in Mindanao. The movie provided just a glimpse of their hardships and their plight, yet it showed me how much my past indifference and ignorance had in fact contributed to our worsening relations with our Muslim brothers.

When my mom and I were discussing the film's merits on our way home, she said that "Bagong Buwan" equalled, if not bettered Rizal in its excellence. She also said that this film was truly of global standards, and that the acting was superb.

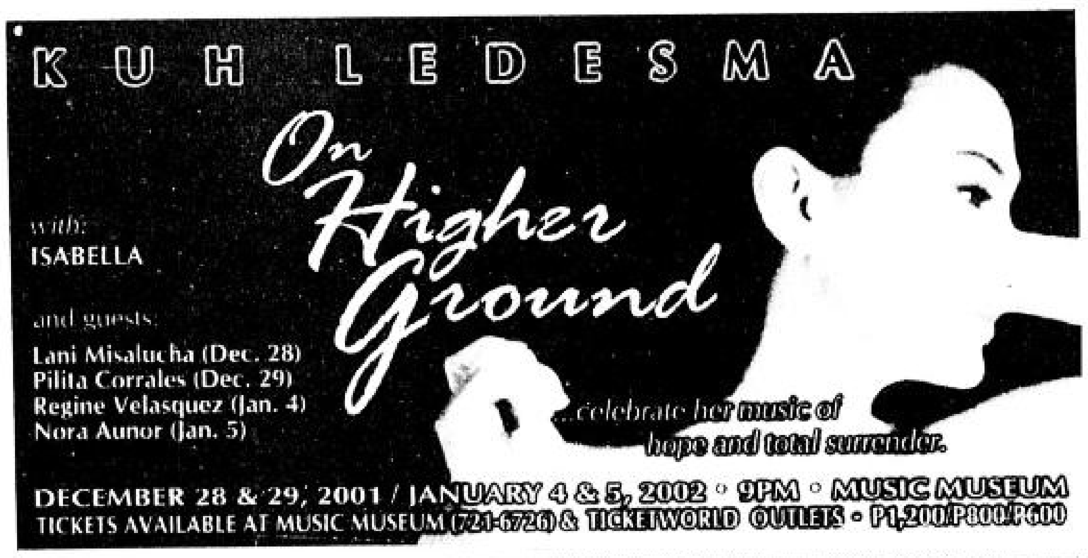
We both noted that there was a respectful silence in the movie theater, people were not only paying attention to what was unfolding on the screen, everyone was also giving what they were viewing serious consideration.

"Bagong Buwan" has a very strong pro-peace message. Clearly, the film's epilogue is supportive of the "all-out peace initiative" of President **Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo**.

I didn't agree with how often former President Estrada's Mindanao offensive had to be pointed out within the film. Once would have been sufficient, to get the message across. In fairness to the former president, my mom did relate that to her knowledge he did release P50 million from the President's Social Fund to aid the refugee settlements in Mindanao.

My mom was present at a dinner that then President Erap had with Tabang Mindanao driving forces, one of them was **Howard Dee**, who is my sister **Viel**'s father-in-law. The former president did act on the fact that the government has the primary responsibility together with NGOs in insuring that women and children caught in the crossfire are fed and sheltered. After all, we are all Filipinos.

BAGONG/ A21



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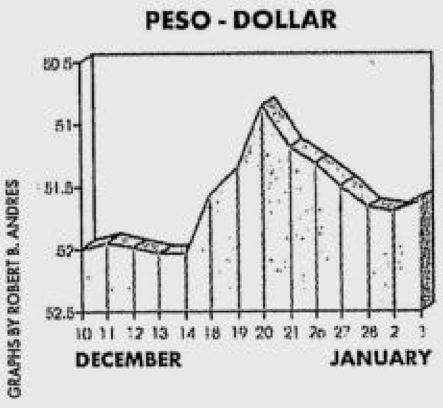


Peso-Dollar Rate

P 51.61 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 3, 2002

¥ 131.46 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 28, 2001

GOLD:$278.30/278.80

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 3, 2002

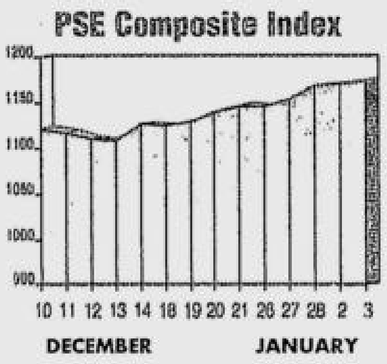
CURRENCIES

Jan-03-2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.107052	1.000000	51.7210
Japan	Yen	0.008380	0.007570	0.3915
United Kingdom	Pound	1.601351	1.446500	74.8144
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.142112	0.128370	6.6394
Switzerland	Franc	0.673144	0.608051	31.4490
Canada	Dollar	0.692990	0.625978	32.3762
Singapore	Dollar	0.597922	0.540103	27.9347
Australia	Dollar	0.569471	0.514403	26.6054
Bahrain	Dinar	2.936633	2.652661	137.1983
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.295214	0.266667	13.7923
Brunei	Dollar	0.597760	0.539957	27.9271
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000106	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025064	0.022640	1.1710
UAE	Dirham	0.301485	0.272331	14.0852
Korea	Won	0.000847	0.000765	0.0396
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.903300	46.7196
Brazil	Real	0.481327	0.121433	22.4874
Denmark	Kroner	0.134433	0.121433	6.2806
India	Rupee	0.023016	0.020790	1.0753
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.291330	0.263158	13.6108
Mexico	New Peso	0.121667	0.109902	5.6842
New Zealand	Dollar	0.468494	0.423191	21.8879
Norway	Kroner	0.124601	0.112552	5.8213
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018497	0.016708	0.8642
South Africa	Rand	0.090239	0.081513	4.2159
Sweden	Kroner	0.107852	0.097423	5.0388
Syria	Pound	0.024118	0.021786	1.1268
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.031684	0.02862	1.4803
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001459	0.001318	0.0682

STOCK MARKET

Shares up slightly



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES inched higher at the close of trading yesterday, with market action dominated by a series of cross sales involving shares of soft drink manufacturer Cosmos Bottling Corp., traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 4.72 points, or 0.4 percent, at 1,174.29, adding to Wednesday's 0.1-percent gain.

About 1.86 billion Cosmos shares were crossed by several brokerage houses led by ING Barings Securities at P6.0454 each, or a total transaction cost of around P11.25 billion. The cross sales marked the completion of RFM Corp.'s sale of its soft drink subsidiary Cosmos to San Miguel Corp., which was agreed upon earlier this year.

Cosmos shares closed unchanged at P5.80 on 135,000 shares traded, excluding the cross sales.

AP

San Miguel IOUs keep high rating

PHILIPPINE Rating Services Corp., an affiliate of Standard & Poor's, has maintained its PRS Aaa rating on San Miguel Corp.'s remaining P1.5 billion in long-term commercial papers in light of the planned entry of one of the Top 10 brewers in the world into the Philippine food and beverage giant.

"Recent development such as Japan's Kirin Brewery Co. Ltd.'s plan to acquire 15 percent of SMC's capital stock demonstrates opportunities for the company to raise funds despite continuing issues regarding management and ownership. Should this deal push through, SMC's credit and business position will only be enhanced further," PhilRatings said in a statement.

PhilRatings explained that it maintained its PRS Aaa rating on SMC's LTCPs considering the publicly listed company's strong position as a leading food, beverage and packaging company in the Philippines.

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is projecting the peso to stabilize at 52 against the US dollar this year due to improved foreign exchange inflows and a better economic environment.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura yesterday said in a news briefing after the listing of Citystate Savings Bank on the Philippine Stock Exchange that he expected a stable trading for the peso this year.

"If we have a balance of payment deficit slowing to less than $100 million this year, there's no reason why the peso shouldn't be stable," Buenaventura said.

For 2001, the BOP gap is expected to hit $1.3 billion.

The BOP is an account of foreign exchange outflows and inflows arising from various economic transactions—including trade, investments and loans—between the country and the rest of the world.

The BSP chief said the assumption used by the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee for the exchange rate was a range of 51.50-52.50 against the US dollar.

"I think it will stabilize at an average of 52," he said.

Buenaventura added that the peso would not likely depreciate this year as the local currency would be supported by inflows from overseas Filipinos, earnings from the Malampaya gas field and stronger exports.

He noted that the expected rebound in the US economy by the middle of the year should boost the country's dollar earnings from exports. For the year, however, the projection is that export earnings would post zero growth but this is better than the sharp contraction in 2001.

Another factor that is expected to boost foreign exchange inflow is the $540-million investment to be made by Kirin Co. Brewery Ltd. of Japan in exchange for a 15-percent stake in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

The BSP is also expecting more foreign direct investments into the local information and communication technology sector, one of the priority areas identified by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Gov't sets changes in AUV taxes

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is scheduled to draw up this month a new revenue regulation on taxing Asian utility vehicles, a move that would allow the government to collect P9 billion in additional taxes annually starting this year.

Finance officials said the new revenue regulation would impose excise taxes on AUVs based on the selling price of the vehicle and no longer on the level of engine displacement.

A finance official said the finance department wanted the Bureau of Internal Revenue to implement the new regulation within the next two months.

The redefinition of the AUV taxes would have to be done on the administrative level for the meantime since a legislation would delay the collection of much-needed revenue, the official said.

The government has to find new sources of earnings this year to help plug an estimated P130-billion budget deficit.

While the DOF has reportedly agreed to continue to exempt the basic AUV models from paying excise taxes, the finance and trade departments have yet to agree on the definition of a basic AUV.

The DOF said that Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Trade Secretary Mar Roxas II were scheduled to meet next week to resolve whether the excise taxes would be based on the wholesale or the retail price and how a basic AUV would be defined.

Camacho earlier said a basic AUV would be like those being used for public transport and would have to be bare. Still, he said he had to discuss with Roxas whether or not the dressed-up versions of these AUVs would be taxed.

The current tax system exempts AUVs with a seating capacity of 10 from paying excise taxes. This definition had been a source of revenue leak since even the high-end sports utility vehicle that should have been classified as luxury could avail themselves of the exemption.

At present, excise taxes on motor vehicles depend on the level of engine displacement—a stronger powered car is slapped with a higher tax. AUVs and public utility vehicles are exempted from paying excise taxes because of the 10-seater rule.

NO VALID VALUE

TERESITA Angeles, a street vendor, is in a somber mood as she waits for customers beside play money at a park in Manila. With recent rumors on plots against the government, Filipinos face an uncertain future as any news on destabilization pushes the economy further away from recovery.

AP

Oil price cuts seen this week

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

BUSINESSMAN Raul Concepcion yesterday said price cuts of at least 40 centavos per liter on oil products could be expected this weekend and that prices might not go up until the end of February.

Concepcion, who chairs the private sector Consumer and Oil Price Watch, noted that the oil companies still owed the public a rollback of an average 84 centavos per liter.

"(Of this), 17 centavos was due to the consumers since the end of November and 67 centavos due since Dec. 21," he explained.

Concepcion added that his group had no objection if the oil firms cut prices by only 40 centavos.

"The balance of 44 centavos (can be) a reserve to cushion the expected increase in crude prices this month," he said.

The COPW chief said average Dubai crude prices went up by 16 US cents a barrel between November and December.

In the same period, the peso value went up by 24 centavos against the dollar.

This would translate to an increase in local prices of only 0.026 centavo a liter, Concepcion said.

He added that Dubai crude price's went up to only $17.90 at the end of December despite an agreement between members and non-members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut daily production by 1.5 million barrels effective Jan. 2.

The Opec had hoped to jack up crude prices to the $22-$28 range and had called for a 2-million-barrel daily production cut with non-Opec producers, which did not push through.

"This is because even before the decision (was made), production was voluntarily being reduced due to a sharp drop in demand," Concepcion said.

Local oil companies have implemented six price cuts in a row since October, which added up to 11 reductions in 2001.

For his part, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. has said that the effect of the slide in petroleum prices should now be reflected in the services provided by other sectors like transport.

DoE computations showed that a private motorist could save as much as P250 a month following the series of rollbacks.

On the other hand, a jeepney driver would save a much as P2,600 a month.

Bangko Sentral vows to cut rates further

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE POLICY-MAKING Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday kept its policy rates and reserve requirement unchanged even as it vowed to ease rates further by as much as half-a-percentage point in the coming months.

"It is too early to make changes but our rates have not bottomed out. There is still room for the overnight rates to go down by 25 to 50 basis points while the reserve requirement could be brought down to the pre-crisis level of 16 percent," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

Thus, overnight borrowing and lending rates were kept at 7.75 percent and 10 percent while banks' reserve requirement remained at 18 percent—9 percent each for the liquidity reserve (which earns market rates) and the statutory reserve (which earns lower than market rates).

Buenaventura stressed that despite the BSP's low rates, some banks continued to charge lending rates that were higher than a cap supposedly being imposed by the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

He said 10 banks were imposing a lending rate higher than 13 percent, the BSP's borrowing rate plus a five-percentage-point mark-up agreed upon by the BAP, the umbrella group of the country's 44 commercial banks.

The central bank chief said that monetary authorities were watching out how a cut in rates and reserves would affect the inflation rate and the foreign exchange rate.

The BSP, Buenaventura said, was also mindful of the timing of the policy changes in relation to the recovery of the economy, which was expected in the second half of the year.

"It is really a matter of timing because much as we would like to ease the money supply, we have to make sure that the funds are used productively. Otherwise, it would also push inflation up."

Still, Buenaventura said the central bank would like to cut rates to encourage lending, help bring down the cost of the government's borrowing as reflected by the weekly treasury bill rates, and also to spur increased consumer spending.

Alongside a call for banks to lower lending rates, the governor also ordered banks to review their credit card operations so that creditworthy clients would not be penalized by higher interest rates just to subsidize the delinquent customers.

January 6, 2002 Issue

SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE GET TO KNOW SOME REAL PEOPLE

Pia Guanio

That Girl on TV

'It' girl Pia Guanio combines smart and sassiness, making for truly drool-worthy TV.

A labor agenda for 2002-2004

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

IF we are to formulate an overall strategic plan for labor, we should address the five pillars of managing and leading the labor and employment administration, both for the short-term 2002 to 2004 for GMA I, and for the long term, if any—that is 2004 to 2008 for GMA II and 2008-2012 for GMA III.

But 2004 to 2008 is highly precarious because if the present administration would continue to fall, there shall be no GMA II. And 2008-2012 is highly speculative because if GMA does not shift her policy thrusts now, she will be political history after May 2004.

Wanted: Strategic thrusts

And so, to be practical, let us focus on the here and now and let's not think of post May 2004, much less 2008. GMA still has 28 months before the May 2004 elections that is 12 months for 2002, 12 months for 2003 and four months for 2004. What is her agenda for labor and employment administration for these 28 months?

With all due respect to Dr. Pat Sto. Tomas whose wisdom and experience far exceed those of any struggling fool like us, and to the Senate and House labor committees, whose chances of changing policy directions have so far been wasted with their myopic and band-aid approaches to the wage issue, we submit that we should also focus on five strategic thrusts and devote all our resources, talent and time to them.

Five basic strategies

These five include: redirecting our employment thrusts; quadrupling manpower training and development efforts; rationalizing and streamlining workers' protection; redefining and promoting industrial peace, and overhauling both the labor code and the labor department.

There are fundamental mistakes in our present assumptions and programs that we need a process, not necessarily a labor summit that is usually perceived as a panacea for all our economic woes, but perhaps a tripartite or multisectoral conference where the government, labor, business and relevant NGOs can contribute their inputs into a national agenda for the next 28 months.

Redirecting employment

The basic mistake of the present employment policy is that it is too fixated at overseas employment. Because of this policy, which is vintage 1974, a giant bureaucracy called POEA, OWWA and the networks of labor attachés abroad are all working to send cheap labor to foreign countries to build their infrastructures, fuel their economy, man their hospitals and even entertain them with our women. This is basically wrong.

We should create jobs here in our country. The POEA and OWWA should re-channel their resources to formulate a gradual shift of employment from abroad to local industries. The government should not spearhead the brain drain but prevent it. Any government official who doesn't want to bring home our OCWs should resign and go abroad himself and work as a maid in Hong Kong or as a macho dancer in Osaka.

Quadrupling training

The problem with Tesda is that it focuses on manual, menial and less cerebral skills. The Filipinos want a better opportunity than hair science, beauty culture or welding. They want computers, high tech machines, world-class skills. Quadrupling does not only refer to budget and efforts but to visioning, planning and strategizing along the trends in technologies.

Tesda, being the dispenser of billions of pesos in government funds, should stop teaching hollow block making or mushroom culture. It should focus on IT and go into computer engineering. If it cannot cope, it better self-destruct so that a worthier agency can do the job.

Rationalizing protection

Why should the DOLE inspectors expect compliance with labor standards when the government itself is the top violator of wage and benefits laws? What is the moral right of DOLE to demand that casual workers be regularized when it is itself an employer of lifetime casuals?

What's the point of raising wages when DOLE inspection data shows less than 50 percent of inspected establishments complying? What's the decency in closing down sweatshops when many government offices are the worst sweatshops in the world?

Redefining industrial peace

If there are no strikes, does it mean that there is peace? Come on. If there are no arbitration cases filed, does it mean the NCMB and NLRC are succeeding? *Non sequitur.*

There is no peace even among the ranks of government employees. The private sector does not monopolize unfair labor practices. There is disillusionment among conciliators, arbiters, and the most neglected of them all, we, the voluntary arbitrators. We are performing government function but the DOLE does not even give us a clerk or a computer. We are supposed to be the preferred mode of dispute settlement but we are treated like poor cousins to the arbiters.

Overhauling labor

The task of overhauling the Labor Code has taken too long that it seems that the commission tasked to do the job has only been trying to perpetuate itself. That kind of snail pace is Jurassic. If it can't do the job after three presidents, the commission, which started under FVR, should self-destruct.

There is an urgent need to abrogate a Martial Law Labor Code and put in place a new millennium law. The DOLE should be overhauled. It is a giant bureaucracy with too many overlaps, delays and red tapes. A dinosaur has no place in a government that is suffering from billions of pesos in budget deficit.

GMA's last card

Twenty-eight months is not too long but GMA can do too many during that period. With a dynamic triumvirate of brilliant ladies, Pat in DOLE, Lucy Lazo in Tesda and Linda Baldoz in POEA, GMA can make miracles happen in the country's labor and employment front. Let's see what the ladies can do despite the politicians. Miracles happened during the short stint of Nieves Confesor. This time, we expect monumental results. *(For comments, you can reach the writer at the following e-mail address: josephus.jimenez@pcppi.com.ph)*

MORE FLEXIBLE RULES

BSP move seen to boost market

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said it would encourage banks to lend to those investing in local equities in order to help perk up the battered stock market.

In a press briefing during the listing of Citystate Savings Bank on the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the BSP would fine-tune its mark-to-market guidelines to encourage securities financing.

Securities financing will allow investors to borrow money from the banks for investment in local stocks. The shares purchased will be used as collateral for the loan.

"We want to encourage banks to pursue securities financing especially now that stocks are undervalued," Buenaventura said.

PSE chair Felipe Yap welcomed the BSP's initiative, saying that the move would help infuse liquidity into the equities market and generate investor interest in local stocks.

"It's very good for the exchange. It is the first time that this administration is giving us a level playing field in terms of borrowed capital to buy selected stocks," Yap said.

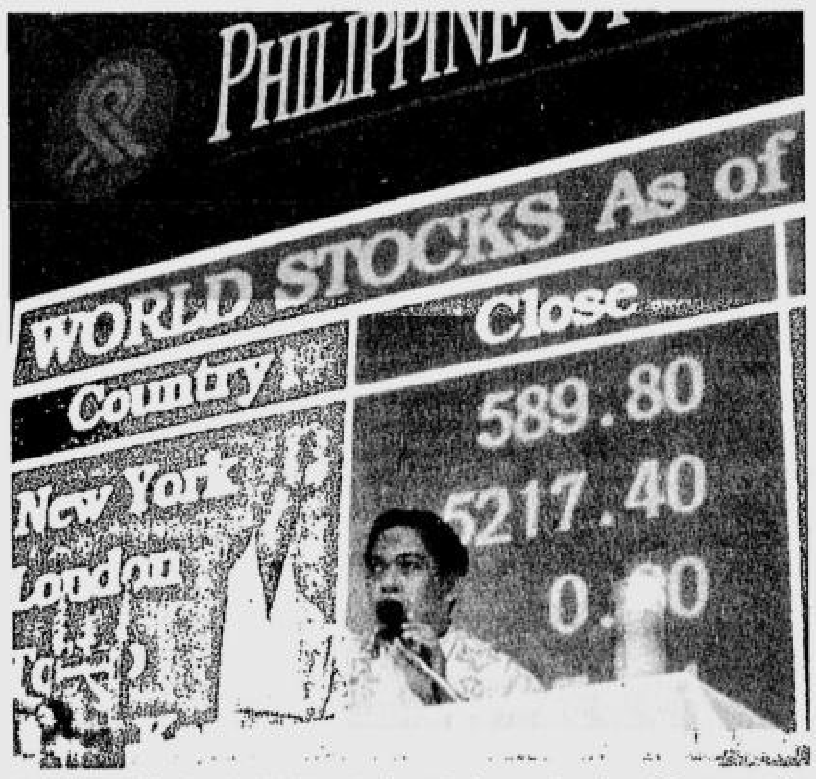
The BSP's current mark-to-market rules require banks to update the value of the assets used as security for the loans disbursed vis-à-vis current market prices.

This is to make sure that the banks are sufficiently hedged against any downturn in the economic environment.

Buenaventura said there was no need to issue new rules to encourage securities financing but that the BSP would simply provide more flexibility in its existing mark-to-market rules.

This developed as the local stock market became one of the world's worst performer in 2001, with the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index dropping by 22 percent to close 2001 at 1,168.08.

Last year saw several foreign brokerage houses pulling out of the country in view of deteriorating revenues arising from thin trade volumes compounded by increasing operating costs.



A CATHOLIC priest holds Mass before the first trading day of the year at the Philippine Stock Exchange. Shares inched higher at the close of trading on Thursday, with market action dominated by a series of cross sales involving shares of soft drink manufacturer Cosmos Bottling Corp., traders said. AP

SEC-registered investments down 54%

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

TOTAL foreign direct investments in new and existing Philippine enterprises fell 54 percent to P39.174 billion last year from P84.705 billion in 2000 due to the global economic slowdown, preliminary data from the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

In a report, the SEC noted that new investments from foreign and local investors continued to come in last year but at levels that were lower than those achieved in the past five years.

The SEC said that in 2001 it registered 11,283 new domestic corporations with total paid-up capital of P13.355 billion or 30 percent lower than the P19.05 billion recorded in the previous year.

This has been the lowest level of paid-up capital registered by the SEC since it peaked at P67.76 billion in 1997.

By industry, the wholesale/retail trade and repair sector accounted for 30.7 percent of the total paid-up capital stock registered. The amount was infused into 4,153 companies.

Total investments in the sector went up slightly to P4.1 billion from P3.6 billion a year ago.

The financial intermediary sector followed with P3.2 billion in new paid-up capital or 24.1 percent of the total pie, up by nearly P300 million from the previous year's level.

The real estate, renting and business activities sector came in third with paid up capital of P3.14 billion infused into 2,852 companies. The amount was, however, 41 percent lower than the P5.36 billion infused in 2000.

The investments in the sector made up 23.5 percent of the total paid-up capital poured in last year.

Notably, investors avoided the manufacturing sector, which saw investments in terms of paid-up capital shrunk to P586 million in 2001 from P4.05 billion the year before.

Among existing companies, only 507 corporations applied for an increase in their authorized capital stock worth P64.8 billion, which was only 38 percent of the P166.16 billion in capital increase reported by 1,102 companies in 2000.

GMA urged to intervene in FMC-Ford row

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

FRANCISCO Motors Corp. will ask President Macapagal to intervene in its long-running contract dispute with Ford Motor Co. and Mazda Motors of Japan due to the indifference of the Board of Investments to its appeal.

FMC senior assistant vice president Rolando Francisco said it has been two years since it filed its protest against the sale of Ford Ranger pickup trucks in the country claiming it was the registered distributor of Mazda B-series pickups.

FMC insists that the Ranger and B-series are the same models because they share the same platform. Ford and Mazda countered that these models have different specifications to justify a separate registration for the Ranger.

Francisco bemoaned the BOI's apathy to its case and he was hoping to get a favorable and swift action from Malacañang. Francisco said he was hoping that the President would give consideration to FMC considering that a homegrown enterprise was fighting against giant foreign companies that trampled on the Filipino assembler's rights.

FMC, which has been distributing Mazda vehicles since the 1980s, has a valid contract to assemble and market Mazda pickups and vans up to 2002.

Francisco said Mazda stopped delivery of new assembly packs to FMC two years ago, simultaneous with the introduction of the Ranger in the Philippines, and this has caused millions of pesos losses to the company.

Francisco said Ford and its 30-percent owned affiliate Mazda had promised to form a joint marketing firm with FMC in order to get FMC's "no objection letter" to the entry of Ranger in the country.

In 1999, the BOI had required Ford to obtain FMC's consent as a requirement for its registration. But in a decision made in 2000 after FMC has withdrawn its "no objection letter", the BOI ruled that the Ranger and B-series were different models.

Francisco noted that FMC had submitted its protest against Ford-Mazda during the Estrada administration which referred the issue to the BOI. Since the BOI has refused to act on its appeal in the last two years, Francisco said FMC has no choice but to ask Malacañang intervention anew.

FMC has asked Ford to discontinue the sale of the Ranger in the country until Mazda has made compensation for its breach of contract with the Filipino assembler. FMC is asking $35 million in compensation from Mazda.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Thursday, January 03, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5	5	5	5	1,000
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	99.5	99.5	99.5	99.5	600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58	58.5	58	58.5	596,100
China Banking Corp.	580	580	580	580	10
Citystate Savings Bank	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	40,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	24.5	25	24.5	24.75	385,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	200	200	195	200	25,730
Philippine National Bank	65	65	64.5	64.5	13,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	2,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	15	15.25	15	15.25	41,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.58	60,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1060	1060	1050	1050	590
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	24	24	15,300
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	100,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	675	680	670	680	12,720
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	80,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.45	3.45	3.3	3.3	32,000
Piltel	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	440,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	415	420	415	420	20,430
Ivantage Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	20,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.017	20,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	22.75	22.75	22.5	22.5	127,300
Manila Electric Co. B	30.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	1,131,100
Petron Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.48	1.48	2,585,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.2	2.22	2.18	2.2	770,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2	2	2	2	15,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	135,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.25	12.75	12.25	12.75	229,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	7,000
RFM Corp.	2.32	2.32	2.3	2.3	1,375,000
San Miguel Corp. A	43	43	43	43	118,500
San Miguel Corp. B	54	54	53.5	53.5	37,600
Universal Robina Corp.	3.1	4.4	3.1	4.4	75,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	2,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.62	0.63	0.62	0.63	30,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.62	0.62	0.61	0.61	70,000
Ayala Corp.	4.7	4.75	4.7	4.75	3,236,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	100,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.77	0.77	140,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	44,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	50,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	120,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.61	8,060,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	500,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	25.5	25.5	25	25.5	65,500
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.145	150,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	1,000,000
Medco Holdings	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	660,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.7	310,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	1,670,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.34	0.34	700,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	280,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	450,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	80,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.3	280,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	70,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	100,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	31,200
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	24	24.25	24	24.25	175,800
Cosmos Bottling Corp.-Pref.	12	12	12	12	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.76	1.84	1.76	1.76	705,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	675	675	675	675	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10	10	10	10	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	42,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.9	5,022,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	250,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	910,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	2,230,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.23	0.235	1,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.7	10,367,000
City & Land Developers	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	20,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06	3,700,000
SM Development Corp.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	30,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.4	1,337,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.9	3	2.9	3	6,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	3,500,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	380,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	440,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	5,700,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	450,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	60,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	20,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	215,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	72,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	40,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	800,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,400,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	300,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,170,630	52,148,325.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,060,405,640	11,756,439,303.64
PRO	25,216,000	52,650,690.00
Mining	10,536,000	411,950.00
OIL	314,540,000	2,106,300.00
GRAND TOTALS:	2,411,868,270	11,863,756,568.64

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	602.61	UP 0.81
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,590.20	UP 8.15
PRO	507.73	UP 0.59
Mining	1,004.72	DOWN 2.79
OIL	2.09	UP 0.11
All Shares Index	692.20	DOWN 3.02
Composite	1,174.29	UP 4.72

NO. OF ADVANCES: 37; NO. OF DECLINES: 32; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 35; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 104; NO. OF TRADES: 1,430

RFM, Cosmos pay LTCPs

RFM Corp. yesterday prepaid its P500 million worth of long-term commercial paper and settled the P750 million worth of LTCPs of its former subsidiary, Cosmos Bottling Corp.

The payment was made following the closing of Cosmos' sale to San Miguel Corp. and The Coca-Cola Co.

RFM vice president Ramon Lopez said that RFM, the flagship holding company of the Concepcion family, yesterday received P11.65 billion from the sale of its 82.3-percent stake in Cosmos to the SMC/TCCC group.

Lopez said that the company would also use the proceeds of the sale to buy dollars and settle some $18 million worth of convertible bonds that RFM failed to redeem last May.

Lopez also said that RFM would also complete today the repurchase of investment fund Argosy's 21-percent stake in RFM at P2.57 per share.

Lopez said RFM now has about P8.3 billion in cash after the pre-payment of RFM's P500 million in LTCPs which were supposed to fall due in April this year and the late payment of Cosmos' LTCPs that fell due on Dec. 14 as well as the other loan payments.

This figure, however, will likely go down to about P5.5 billion once other obligations are settled.

SMC and TCCC acquired 100 percent of Cosmos for an enterprise value of P14 billion.

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of **Balabac Resources & Holdings Co. Inc.** has postponed its annual stockholders' meeting, earlier slated for Jan. 30, to April 2.

* * *

SULFICIO Tagud Jr. ended his term as chair and president of **C&P Homes Inc.** on Dec. 31, 2001. Marcelino Mendoza was elected by the board to replace him. Jerylle Luz Quismundo was elected director.

* * *

THE PSE lifted on Jan. 3 the suspension on the trading of **Sinophil Corp.** shares following the submission of the company's annual report using SEC Form 17-A.

* * *

THE EXCHANGE, however, maintained the suspension on the trading of shares of **Mondragon International Philippines** because of its failure to pay the basic fines for the late submission of the company's second and third quarter reports.

* * *

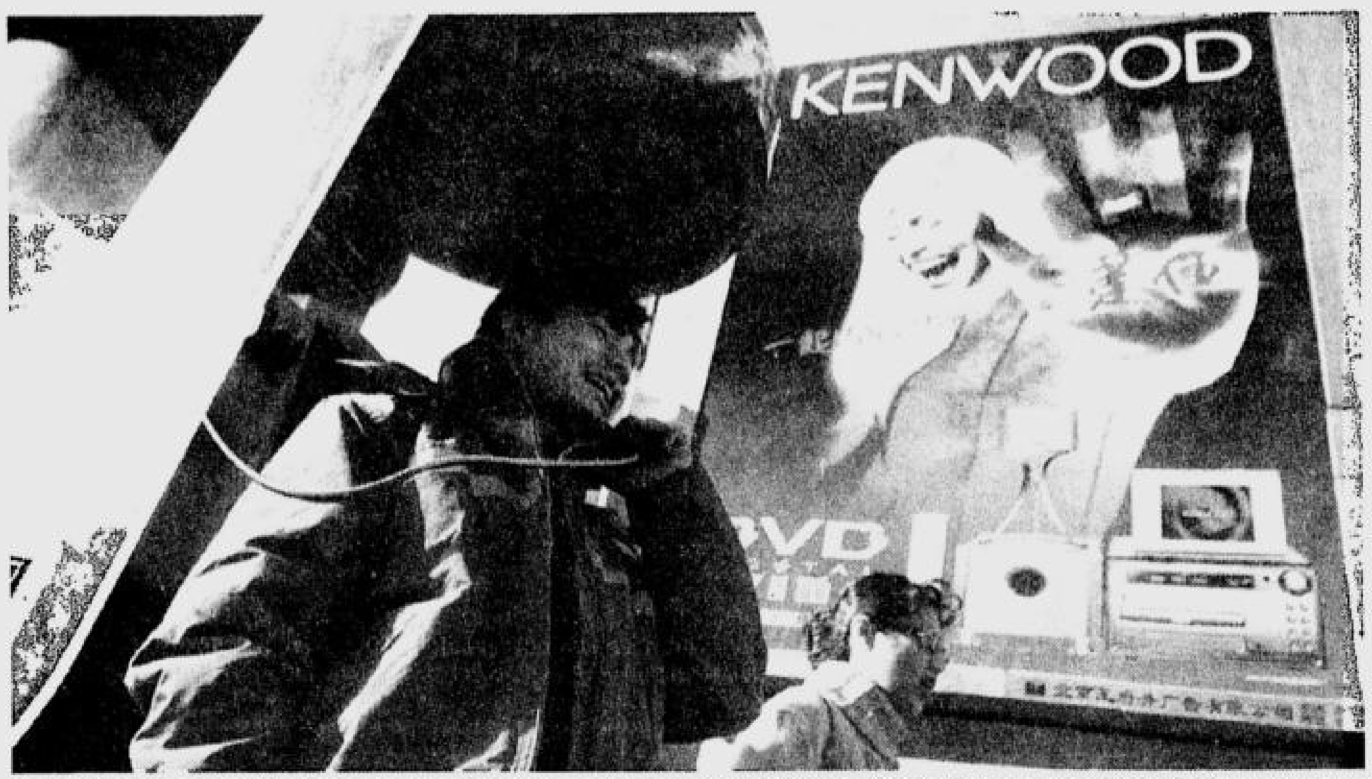
FEDERAL Chemicals Inc. has withdrawn the full proceeds of its initial public offering. It has also paid the trust receipts and loans due to **Security Banking Corp.** Portion of the proceeds of the IPO are being used as the company's additional working capital.

* * *

GRAND Plaza Hotel Corp. said it was not aware of any reason for the unusual movement of its share price. ***Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research***

POLITICAL BICKERING

South Asia free trade deal put off by a year



A CHINESE uses a public phone near an advertisement for imported DVD players in Beijing. China's entry into the World Trade Organization promises to bring an influx of cheaper foreign products and greater access for foreign business including telecommunications companies. AP

KATHMANDU, Nepal—South Asian leaders meeting here are set to put off their ambitious plans to turn the region into a free trade area amid political bickering that has stalled the negotiations.

The seven countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) were due to adopt a framework treaty for a European Union style economic integration last year, but it had now been put off until the end of 2002.

"The council of ministers at a meeting on Tuesday decided to have the framework treaty by the end of 2002," said the outgoing head of the SAARC council of ministers, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Tyronne Fernando.

SAARC originally decided to adopt the South Asian Free Trade Agreement by 2005, but a summit in the Maldives optimistically advanced the date to 2001.

Officials here said SAARC even failed to conclude the final round of talks on a Preferential Trade Agreement, which should have been in place by 1997.

Fernando said there was no disagreement on putting off the dates for the free trade agreement, but the grouping was discussing new ways to tackle the problem of poverty.

He said SAARC was also working toward developing common positions at negotiations with the World Trade Organization.

The seven SAARC countries together have a population of 1.3 billion people, or just over a fifth of humanity. It is considered the world's poorest region.

The main reason for the slow progress in trade and economic cooperation within the grouping is squabbling between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan—the two big members of SAARC who have overshadowed the association since its first summit in 1985.

At the ninth summit in the Maldives in May 1997, both India and Pakistan committed themselves to dismantling trade barriers in a bid to jumpstart the struggling regional economies.

Pakistan's then foreign minister, Gohar Ayub Khan, said they could not be the "ostrich of South Asia."

Talks between India and Pakistan over Kashmir alone would boost economic activity in the region and "unleash the latent potential of South Asia," he said.

But a year later, India and Pakistan carried out tit-for-tat nuclear test explosions, dealing another blow to the SAARC process.

India's then foreign secretary, K. Ragunath, called for monetary union, economic integration and a single currency for South Asia following in the footsteps of the European Union.

But even as most of the European Union fully embraced the euro on Jan. 1, SAARC was putting off plans to move toward trade cooperation. *AFP*

Japanese execs expect tough year, plan wage cuts

TOKYO—Most top Japanese business executives expect the recession-hit economy to not see an upturn until October and are planning to cut wages or lay off staff this year, according to a survey.

A hundred top executives at major Japanese companies said they were trimming labor costs in order to weather the information technology slump and weak overall economic conditions, the survey by Kyodo News Agency found.

Already, 41 companies had slashed wages and another 30 were planning or considering cuts, the news agency said in a report late Wednesday.

"Forty-seven companies have reduced or plan to cut staff and another eight are considering it," it added.

Nearly 80 percent of the surveyed firms said they believed the economy would not begin to recover until after October 2002, Kyodo said.

The majority of business leaders advocated deregulation of the economy, writing off of non-performing loans held by banks and the establishment of an employment safety net as ways to improve the economy.

"The best road (to economic recovery) is to steadily resolve such structural problems as the disposal of bad loans and the budget deficit," said Mikio Sasaki, president of major trading house Mitsubishi Corp.

Of the surveyed companies, 70 percent said they expected the nation's economy to either be flat or contract up to one percent in the fiscal year to March 2003.

Over half said sluggish personal consumption was dragging down economic prospects, while others cited the US economic slowdown, rising unemployment and deteriorating company earnings as standing in the way of recovery, the report said. *AFP*

Malaysia's trade surplus shrinks

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Malaysia's preliminary November trade surplus fell to a narrower-than-expected 3.9 billion ringgit ($1 billion) due to a steeper drop in exports than imports, the Department of Statistics said Thursday.

The surplus is smaller than economists' expectations of 4.8 billion ringgit ($1.26 billion) due to a more moderate-than-expected fall in imports.

November imports were down 8.6 percent year-on-year, less than the average expectations by economists of an 11.8-percent decline. Exports were down 13.4 percent in line with analysts' average projection of a 13.1-percent fall. *AP*

More US job cuts seen despite hopes on economy

WASHINGTON—Job cuts still loom for American workers despite signs the US economy may be headed for a recovery soon, analysts predicted.

The December employment report, due out on Friday, is expected to paint a somber picture of the labor market at a time when some economic data lately have offered hopeful signs.

"I think we still have some bad news in front of us," Mark Vitner, an economist at Wachovia Corp. in Charlotte, North Carolina, said Wednesday.

US experts in a Reuters poll forecast Friday's report from the Labor Department will show the loss of 139,000 jobs.

That would be less than half the 331,000 jobs that were slashed in November, but would still offer a grim reminder that the economic pain is far from over.

The unemployment rate is seen rising to 5.8 percent from 5.7 percent in November.

The US economy has been in a recession since March, with its woes made worse by the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon that damaged consumer psychology and led wary businesses to announce mass layoffs.

Heartened by a spate of upbeat reports lately, economists have grown hopeful that the recession could lift within the next few months.

But in past business cycles, even when the economy emerged from recession, the job market often remained weak. Analysts expect that pattern to hold this time, as firms focus on cost-cutting and continue trimming their payrolls.

Indeed, many economists project that the jobless rate could hit a peak of 6.5 percent sometime around midyear before it starts to head lower again. *Reuters*

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Euro set for glowing first report after launch

FRANKFURT—European Central bankers are expected to give the euro a glowing initial report when they meet here Thursday for the first time since the successful launch of the new notes and coins in 12 EU nations.

Markets and European officials declared the New Year launch of euro cash a great success on its first day of business on Wednesday but the "europhoria" came with a price—shortages of notes and coins as massive demand gobbled up stocks.

The new currency succeeded in its first market test, rising above the 0.90-dollar mark in its first day of trading, up from 0.8912 on Monday.

The European Central Bank's regular meeting here to fix interest rates across the euro zone takes on added significance Thursday, offering the chance to give the euro its first report card.

The normal news conference at which ECB president Wim Duisenberg usually explains the reasoning behind the bank's latest monetary policy decisions has been set back by half an hour and will be preceded by a separate news conference held jointly by Duisenberg, EU Commissioner Pedro Solbes and the new head of the Ecofin council, Rodrigo Rato.

The topic of that first conference is "the historic introduction of the euro banknotes and coins," and the three ECB heavyweights will present the first official data on progress of the euro changeover.

By all accounts, the ECB has prepared a glowing report for the euro, which was officially born on Jan. 1 1999 but only made an appearance in the form of notes and coins on Tuesday.

The ECB badly needed a few feathers to stick in its cap after coming under heavy fire during the first three years of its existence.

The fledgling institution was itself blamed for the long slide in the value of the euro against the dollar on the world's foreign exchange markets since the single currency was officially born.

Thus, the ECB, glorying in the success of the euro cash rollout, looked likely to use the opportunity to urge euro-zone governments to do more to get their economies and finances in order, economists predicted.

The launch of the euro across 12 countries and over 300 million people went ahead with few hitches, according to Citibank analyst Robert Sinche, who said the euro had strengthened amid promising economic outlook reports for Europe. *AFP*

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Will US auto sales dive in 2002 after binge?

DETROIT, Michigan—It's anybody's guess what automakers will do to sustain sales and restore profit margins in 2002 after bingeing on interest-free loans in the last quarter of 2001.

With virtual unanimity on the fact that aggressive incentives in late 2001 "borrowed" about half a million sales from 2002—and certified that 2001 would go down as the third- or possibly second-highest sales year in US history—there were no prizes for guessing that the market would be down next year.

Some analysts, including the number-crunchers at Ford Motor Co. and American Honda, predict that the bumper sales years of 1999 (16.9 million), 2000 (17.4 million) and 2001 (an estimated 17 million) could give way to a modest 15.5-million-vehicle year in 2002.

Others, like David Healy, an automobile analyst with Burnham Securities, are banking on the Federal Reserve's 11 interest rate cuts and other economic stimuli to keep one of the major engines of the US economy turning over at a rate similar to this year's.

"My best guess with the low interest rates and government spending is for 16.4 million light vehicles," he said, with the caveat that most of those would come in the second half of the year.

The latter is certainly a safe bet: Ford is cutting production 9 percent in the first three months of next year in anticipation of a drop-off in sales, and this at a time when automakers' inventories are already pretty lean.

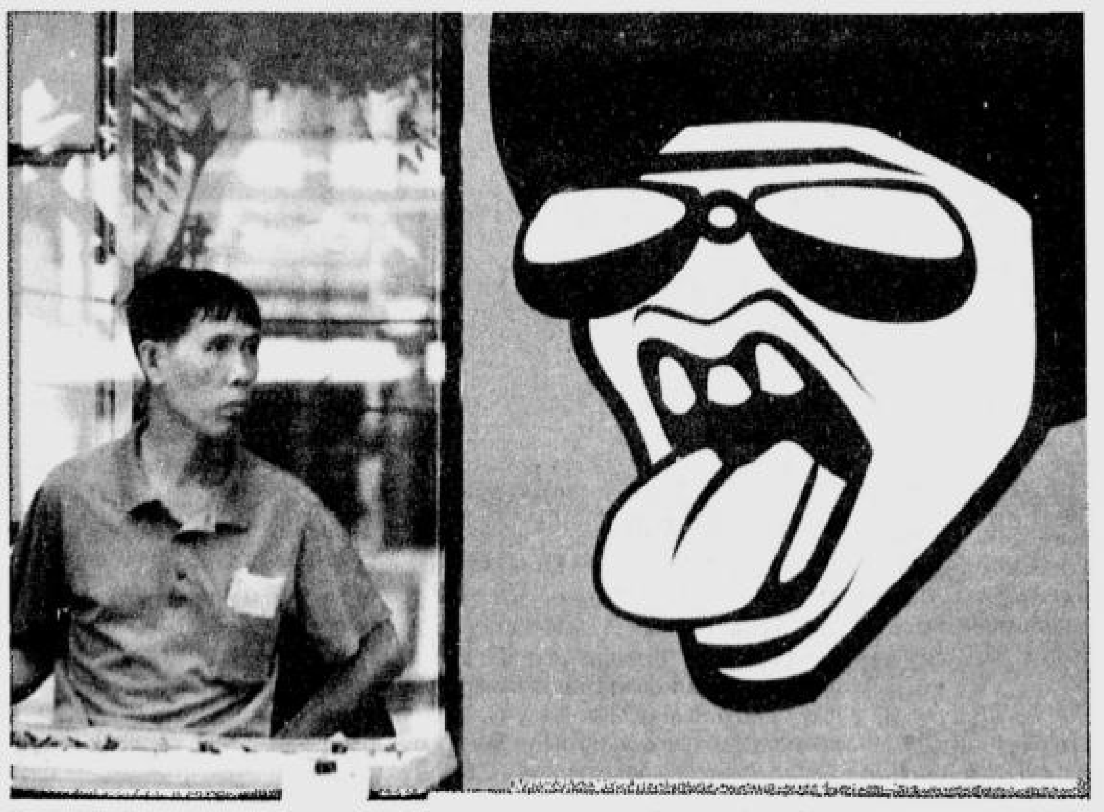
Not only have the zero-percent financing deals introduced by the Big Three (General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and the Chrysler Group) since Sept. 11 depleted stocks, but automakers have also kept a tight rein on production.

Wards Automotive Reports noted that the total number of vehicles produced in the United States up to the week ending Dec. 28 was an estimated 11.4 million units—off 11.1 percent from the 12.8 million in the same period of 2000.

It's not at all clear what will drive 2002 sales, although new vehicles like Ford's 2003 model year Lincoln Navigator or Expedition, massive sport-utility vehicles, "should add good volume," according to Healy.

Ford, GM and Chrysler have all restricted the financing deals that got consumers buying cars in droves in October and, to a lesser degree, in November, limiting them to fewer models and shorter periods.

Ford chief financial officer Martin Inglis said the company was keen to dispense with the expensive incentives that helped push the company deeper into the red in the past quarter. And even GM economist Paul Ballew admitted that the incentives were too costly and would not bring in consumers indefinitely. *AFP*



A NIKE advertising logo seems to stick a tongue to an earring vendor taking a rest next to a sign in Bangkok. The inflation rate for 2001 released Wednesday by the Thai Commerce Ministry was at 1.6 percent, but Thai researchers said it was lower than they had forecast. AP

Sykes closes call centers in US, Europe

TAMPA, Florida—Customer service center operator Sykes Enterprises announced Wednesday it was closing two US centers and a European operation, resulting in the loss of 230 jobs.

Sykes, which operates service centers for computer companies such as Microsoft Corp. and Apple Computer Corp., blamed the cuts on the slow economy. Sykes employs about 15,000 people in 41 centers worldwide.

Sykes is closing its Greeley, Colorado, call center and one in Bismarck, North Dakota. A second Bismarck call center will remain open and employees are being consolidated at that location. One of the company's five European centers is also being closed, but company officials have declined to disclose its location.

The cuts are expected to cost the company $15 million to $16.5 million. Employees had already been notified and most received two weeks pay in a severance package, chief financial officer Michael Kipphut said.

Two other offices, in Tampa and in Seattle, where about 35 people work, were also being closed, Kipphut said. He said the jobs being cut ranged from managers to those taking customer service calls. *AP*

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People, Events & Products

ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Editor
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Siemens innovates the cellular phone

Be inspired with Siemens' line-up of mobile phones. Each Siemens mobile phone was designed to offer maximum convenience to the user.

First in line from the German telecoms giant is the Siemens SL45, a phone with a built-in MP3 player and professional digital voice recorder. This means that besides being able to record conversations , the Siemens SL45 allows you to listen to your favorite song via the MP3 player which can store a number of songs of your choice.

Meanwhile, the Siemens S45 is tagged as "the office where you are" because even if it's in the middle of a traffic jam, its GPRS quality enables faster access to data so you can sit back and take charge of the stock market or even check your flight schedule. On top of that, its speakerphone allows you to juggle several tasks even as you're in the middle of a conversation.

The ME45, on the other hand, is perfect for outdoors. With ME45, you can be just about anything and everything you want. It is water, dust and shock resistant. And with its organizer function, everything is taken care.of.

Express yourself with C45 Siemens. The C45 is made to fit every individual's lifestyle. C45 is equipped with front and back exchangeable CLIPit covers in different colors, interactive games, and is capable of downloading ring tones, bitmaps and screensavers. In addition, its enhanced messaging service allows users to convey emotions and create their own personal style of messaging.

Siemens S40 with its fashionable blue backlight, is the perfect traveling companion (best use in the United States) of a jetsetter because it's a tri-band phone. This means that every GSM network in the world (900, 1800 and 1900 MHz) is at your disposal plus WAP gives you easy access to the Web. S40 is a full mobile business partner which interfaces without effort to sophisticated lifestyles.

The Siemens M35 is perfect for the tough mobile phone user who wants a phone equally as tough. Because it is water, shock and dust resistant, the Siemens M35 is indeed tough enough. It also is a WAP phone and is dual band.

Other top-of-the-line phones of Siemens are the A40 (with interchangeable faces), the light, easy and affordable A35/A36 and the WAP-capable C35 and S35.

Siemens also offers original accessories such as desktop charger, car cigarette charger, car kit portable, headset with PTT, car cradle, belt clips and many more that enhance your Siemens mobile phone even more.

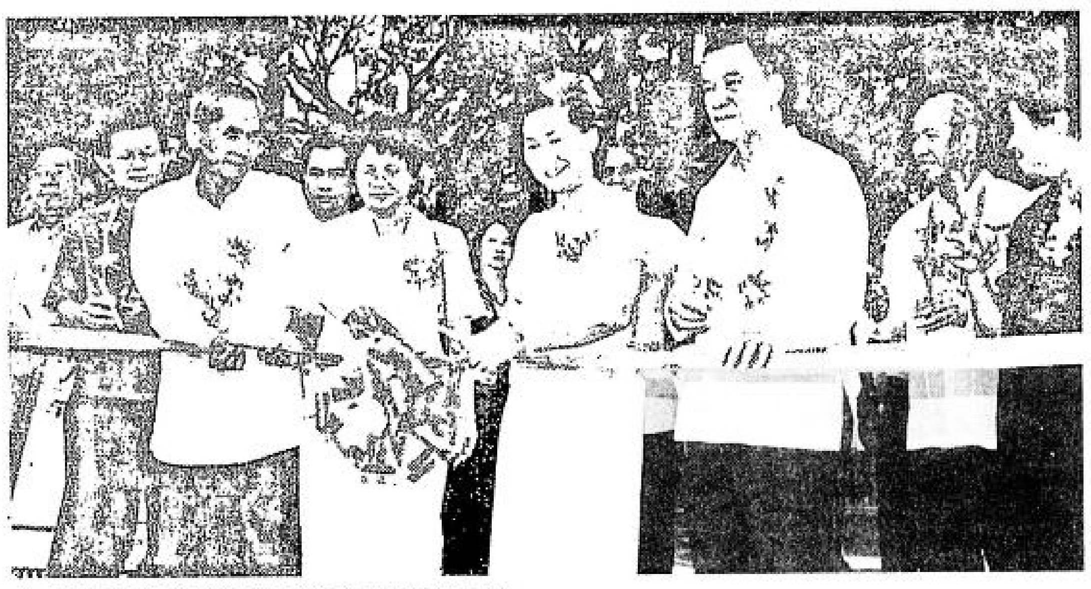
The Siemens Information and Communication Mobile Group (IC Mobile) offers a complete range of mobile solutions including mobile devices, infrastructure and applications. Devices include mobile phones, wireless modules, mobile organizers and cordless phones as well as products for wireless home networks.

The infrastructure portfolio includes the complete range of GSM, GPRS and UMTS mobile network technologies from base stations and switching systems to intelligent networks for prepaid services. Applications cover mobile phone services for Unified Messaging, Location Based Services and Mobile Payment.

Access further information about the Siemens SL45 at www.siemens-mobile.com.

INFOSERVE INTERNATIONAL AWARDED AT THE PALACE

Infoserve International Inc. receives the Packaged Application of the Year Awards for its Megabanker product line from Microsoft at awarding ceremonies with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang. Shown is Edwin Boon, director for partner business group of Microsoft presenting the plaque to Zoilo Jesus M. dela Cruz, III, chair and CEO of Infoserve International Inc., with President Arroyo and George Ruffner, senior commercial officer of the US Embassy.

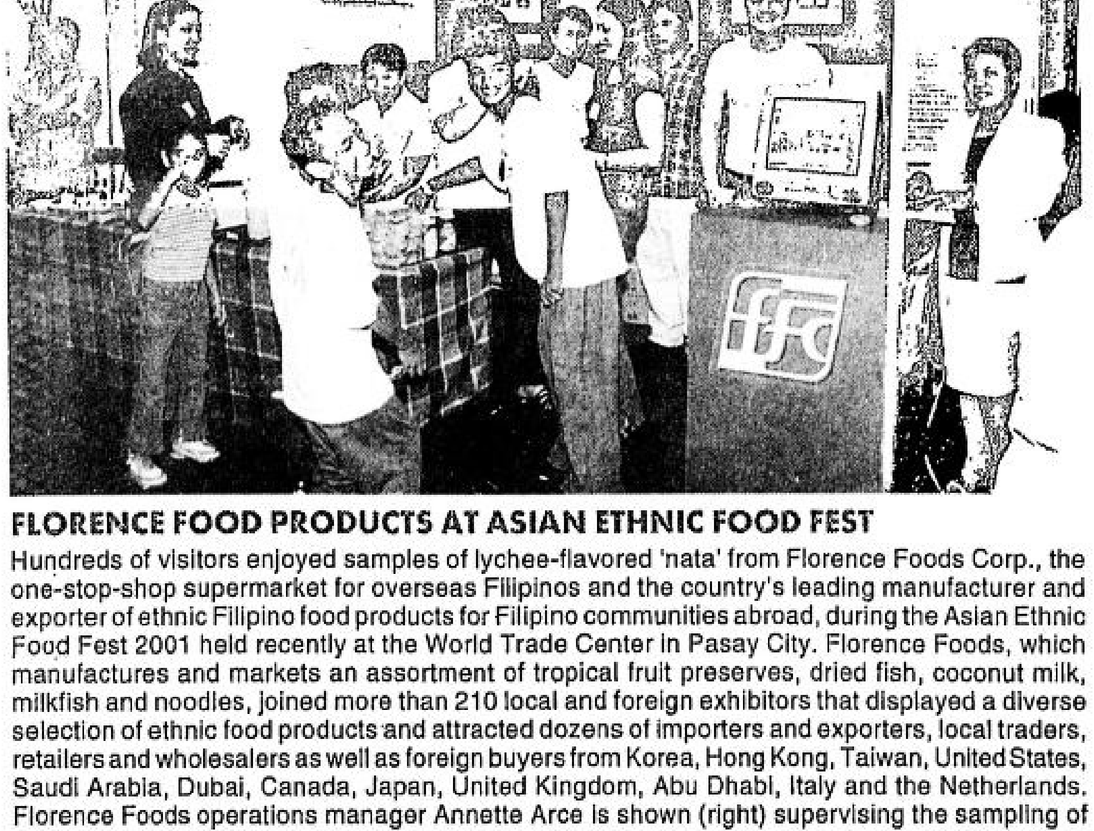


A MULTIPURPOSE GYM FOR CLSU

Carmen K. Tan (center), a trustee of the Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc., her husband Dr. Lucio Tan (third from right) and Dr. Rodolfo Undan and his wife (left, holding ribbon) lead the ribbon cutting rites marking the inauguration of a P15-million multipurpose gym donated by the Foundation to the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) in the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija. In turning over the gym to CLSU, Tan Yan Kee chair and president Dr. Lucio Tan admonished CLSU students to work hard and make the best use of the facility for their academic and physical well-being.

I/AME, EXCELSIOR COLLEGE LAUNCH ALLIANCE

The International Academy of Management and Economics (I/AME) successfully launched its strategic alliance with Excelsior College of Albany, New York at Shangri-La Manila in Makati. Shown are (from left) Evlyn Fuentes, country manager of Excelsior College, Dr. Manuel D. Punzal, CHED commissioner and acting chair; Philip Normand, director of Alliance Francaise, Victoria London, I/AME-Excelsior College enrollee, Dr. Emmanuel Noli T. Santos, I/AME chair-CEO; professor Emmanuel Candido S. Santos II, I/AME president-COO.



FLORENCE FOOD PRODUCTS AT ASIAN ETHNIC FOOD FEST

Hundreds of visitors enjoyed samples of lychee-flavored 'nata' from Florence Foods Corp., the one-stop-shop supermarket for overseas Filipinos and the country's leading manufacturer and exporter of ethnic Filipino food products for Filipino communities abroad, during the Asian Ethnic Food Fest 2001 held recently at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Florence Foods, which manufactures and markets an assortment of tropical fruit preserves, dried fish, coconut milk, milkfish and noodles, joined more than 210 local and foreign exhibitors that displayed a diverse selection of ethnic food products and attracted dozens of importers and exporters, local traders, retailers and wholesalers as well as foreign buyers from Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, United States, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom, Abu Dhabi, Italy and the Netherlands. Florence Foods operations manager Annette Arce is shown (right) supervising the sampling of the lychee-flavored 'nata' by young visitors at the company's booth. More than 13,000 visitors viewed the trade show organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (Citem), an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, during its successful three-day run.

Federal Hardware sets new standards

BEFORE Federal Hardware Builder's Center came along, people who needed something from a hardware had two choices – the poorly-lighted and non-air conditioned "old school" hardware where orders are taken by a surly sales clerk, you pay for your purchases and then leave, or the pseudo hardware in the mall, which is actually just a mini-mart with a limited range of products and services.

Federal Hardware Builder's Center does not fit into either category. It is a new concept in retailing that originated from the United States and is setting new standards in the Philippine market.

Federal Hardware responds to the increased interest in home improvement, renovation and interior detailing activities resulting from the 1990s construction boom. The target market is wide – from young couples who want their homes enhanced by the most modern building materials available today to the person with the proverbial ''green thumb''. The hardware has positioned itself as a one-stop, budget-friendly shop for builders with a spacious store display and aisle after aisle of merchandise.

Located along Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, Federal Hardware debunks the myth that a hardware has to look dull and boring. Customers are welcomed with prominent signage mounted on an archway that's an impressive combination of steel and hardiflex in a deep blue color.

The 4,000-sqm selling area is fully air conditioned, stocked with world-class imported and local brands of do-it-yourself products, plumbing, hardware, tiles, hand and power tools, paints, electrical, lights and accessories, lawn and garden and car care products. Federal Hardware's product line continues to grow as the company expands its global sourcing and introduces fresh retailing concepts to give consumers the best options in addressing their building and construction needs.

Products and stock displays are housed in towering steel racks to make it easier for shoppers to browse. To help customers gain insight on their product requirements, informative product posers, visual blow-ups and colorful point-of-purchase peripherals have been installed throughout the store. Merchandise have been grouped in sections such as the do-it-yourself (which carries common needs like lockets and doorknobs and hard-to-find tools like allen wrenches) and Lawn Garden (which includes indoor and outdoor nurseries). 3M, Barrier, Black & Decker, Buffalo, Champs, Dutch Boy, General Electric, Jett, KYK, Nippon, Ceramica Europa, Buena Casa and Eurotiles are only some of the brands carried by Federal Hardware.

The store's professional sales team serves customers Monday to Sundays from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. For more information, call 812-4360, 812-4351 and 812-4103.

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EMBER 21, 2001

FPI, VERITAS SEAL PARTNERSHIP

Data storage has become a critical part of the overall technology infrastructure of enterprises today with the total amount of data being stored in electronic form growing more than 100 percent annually. With this in mind, Fujitsu Philippines Inc. through WeCare Technology Services Corp., its technology services and support subsidiary, seals a partnership agreement with Veritas Software Corp., the leading global provider of core storage management technologies, as authorized high-end enterprise reseller or diamond partner reseller. Shown is Felipe R. Manalang, FPI president, addressing ICT professionals in a recently held cocktail at Mandarin Oriental, that 'we have chosen to partner with market-leading storage provider Veritas Software to support this ever-increasing market that will not stop growing as businesses continue to strengthen their global competitiveness.' FPI is a leading system integrator of ICT solutions for Philippine enterprises.

Sports House opens 21st branch in Davao City

THE SPORTS House chain of sporting goods outlets has opened its 21st branch at SM Davao City.

Comprising 78 sqm of retail space, this newest Sports House outlet is at the ground floor of SM, now the biggest mall in Davao City.

Sports House offers a wide range of exercise equipment and accessories that include a host of fashionable sports gadgets, watches and family outdoor wares.

The opening of this new branch is also in time for the Christmas holidays when the local folks are in search of "smart buys" as gifts for their loved ones, according to Sports House.

The company provides personalized service, offers premium items at discounted rates, and holds seasonal and monthly in-store promotions for various products that cater not only to sports buffs but to every member of the family.

"Only Sports House can offer such quality products at the lowest possible price," said company president Mars C. Chua.

From its first and only outlet on Gilmore Avenue in New Manila, Quezon City, Sports House has grown into a big retail chain with 21 branches nationwide.

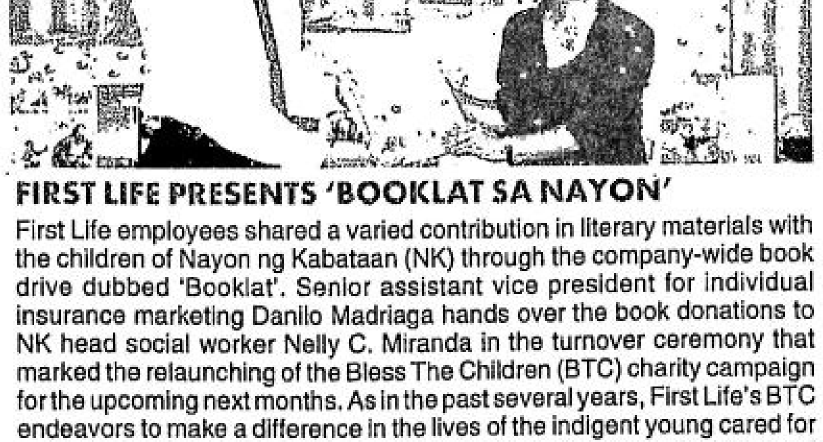
These branches are in SM City North Edsa, SM Megamall, Robinsons Galleria, Harrison Plaza, SM Fairview, SM South Mall-Alabang, Ali Mall-Cubao, SM Bacoor, Plaza Luisita Mall in Tarlac, Session Road in Baguio, Fiesta World Mall in Lipa City, SM Valeria and SM City in Iloilo, Robinsons Place in Bacolod, SM City-Cebu, SM Centerpoint in Sta. Mesa, SM Pampanga, SM Super Center in Sucat, Landmark in Makati, and now SM City in Davao City.

Every branch also regularly changes its store ambiance, not only to revitalize its corporate brand, but also to adapt to the current promo or season.

This new store, Chua said, would attest to the emergence of Davao City as a local and regional shopping hub in the South.

VAVA PARTIES AND INDUCTS

The Verdant Acres Villagers Association Inc. of Pamplona, Las Piñas City held its 2001 Christmas party and induction of officers Dec. 30 at Verdant Acres' basketball covered court. The 2002-2005 Vava officers are lawyer Dannie Mendez (president), Rene Jimeno (vice president), Concepcion Rios (secretary), Linda Santos (treasurer), Rico Candido (auditor), Lita Alejandro (business manager), Emmie Velarde (PRO), and marshals Tony Santos, Lito Romero, Ruiz Nadal, Virgilio Martinez. Its directors are Larry Santos (chair), Chit Barrios (vice chair), Ditty Ochoa (secretary), and directors Cris Alejandro, Johnny Caspe, Salve Cristobal, Dammy Gapusan, Art Mijares, and Josie Restar.



FIRST LIFE PRESENTS 'BOOKLAT SA NAYON'

First Life employees shared a varied contribution in literary materials with the children of Nayon ng Kabataan (NK) through the company-wide book drive dubbed 'Booklat'. Senior assistant vice president for individual insurance marketing Danilo Madriaga hands over the book donations to NK head social worker Nelly C. Miranda in the turnover ceremony that marked the relaunching of the Bless The Children (BTC) charity campaign for the upcoming next months. As in the past several years, First Life's BTC endeavors to make a difference in the lives of the indigent young cared for at the Nayon under the auspices of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. With the contributions from clients,the BTC spreads the message of children through funds that help uplift the amenities at the NK.

Who's afraid of the new economic order?

(From page B8)

perative for SMEs wanting to hold their own in the open marketplaces is to standardize. This implies that SMEs should align with the applicable standards for their product lines and continue to access information on best practices in their field. The global customer demands value for his money. SMEs are therefore constrained to provide value through improved customer service, faster cycle times, streamlined processes, predictable delivery times and lower costs.

Quality. Related to standardization is quality. With goods flowing freely into the country from almost anywhere, SMEs cannot but compete in terms of quality. This may be done through quality training, manpower upgrading from top to bottom, development of more "quality professionals," and continual upgrading of quality knowledge company-wide. Crucial here is the upgrading of computerization capability not only in data collection and financial management, but also in process control and analysis.

Productivity. Productivity is yet another call for SMEs on the wings of the global market arena. There are imperatives for actualizing productivity. The first of these is for entrepreneurs to adopt a mindset of "continuing improvement." From here, all others would flow: adopting new technologies, forging strategic partnerships; maximizing use of information technology, being innovative and agile, inculcating a productivity work culture, and benchmarking of "best-in-the-world" practices.

Technology

Technology. A basic tool to achieving productivity, quality, standardization and environment-friendly methods is technology, i.e. appropriate technology, defined as a package of hardware and software which complements the available skills and resources of a firm. Technology may be acquired through various routes—through suppliers of machines and equipment, joint venture arrangements with foreign partners, and subcontracting relationships with big mother companies.

Information technology. In the realm of technology development, that of IT has been the most phenomenal in our time. Advances in IT has engendered e-commerce, the conduct of business transactions via the Internet, widely believed to have helped level the playing field for doing business for SMEs. E-commerce has exposed SMEs to unlimited markets, lowering of transaction costs, and breaking down size-related barriers in pursuing business opportunities.

Win-win mode in people management

Human resource management. HRM is not the least among the tasks obligatory to SMEs who want to compete strongly globally. SMEs are well-known, in the first place, to be the economy's leading creator of jobs and, in the second place, to have a poor record of compliance with labor standards. Experience has shown that a "win-win" approach is possible in building up SMEs' capability to comply with new labor standards and the requirements of the West for social accountability in business management.

Train to win

As SMEs gear themselves to be competitive, export-oriented and world-class, they also need support systems that would match their new initiatives, thrust for thrust. These will come from government and non-government organizations mandated to promote the development of SMEs.

(The University of the Philippines Institute for Small-Scale Industries [UP ISSI] and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines [Ecop] will hold a training program called "Going Global" on Jan. 22. Call Celia R. Pascual or Lori Sandoval at 928-7076, 926-6376 or 927-9238 for inquiries.)

Reducing tax payments . . .

(From page B8)

compromise is based on doubtful validity or financial incapacity.

For cases of doubtful validity, the minimum compromise rate is 40 percent of the basic assessed tax. However, the taxpayer can still insist on lowering this rate. He can request for a compromise rate lower than 40 percent provided that he submits his request in writing.

It is not that easy for the taxpayer though to avail of the lower rate because his request has to get prior approval from the National Evaluation Board (NEB). The NEB is composed of no less than the commissioner as chair and his four deputy commissioners as members.

For cases of financial incapacity, the minimum rate is only 10 percent.

In this case, the taxpayer-applicant needs to submit with his application (a) a certification from his employer on his prevailing monthly salary, including allowances; and (b) a sworn statement that he has no other source of income than from employment.

If the taxpayer is an individual without any source of income, the minimum rate is likewise 10 percent, in which case, he has to submit with his application a sworn statement that he derives no income from any source whatever.

The 10-percent minimum rate also applies if the taxpayer has zero net worth, has negative net worth, has not operated for three years or more as of the date of application for compromise, has moratorium/suspension of payments or has been declared insolvent or bankrupt.

For dissolved corporations, those that have not operated for three years, and those with surplus or earnings deficit resulting in impairment in the original capital by at least 50 percent, the minimum rate is higher—20 percent.

Approving authority

Offers of compromise of assessments issued by the Regional Offices involving basic deficiency taxes of P500,000 or less and for minor criminal violations discovered by the Regional and District Offices shall be subject to the approval by the Regional Evaluation Board (REB).

All compromise settlements within the jurisdiction of the national office shall be approved by the NEB.

If the compromise offer meets the conditions set forth in the rules, the taxpayer then becomes a free man—free in the eyes of revenue officers. That is, until another assessment comes along.

(For comments and suggestions, please send an e-mail to sgv mail@Andersen WO.)

Can't sell electronics? Try bundling them

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FILIPINOS apparently love these combo treats because they feel that they are getting a bargain from buying two or three things instead of just one.

EVERYONE loves a good deal. Filipinos especially have a penchant for so-called "combo" or combination meals. These packaged meals usually include a drink, the main dish, which is either a fried chicken, spaghetti or a burger, with fries or rice, found almost everywhere.

The "combo" mentality is not found in food alone. Even department stores provide consumers with bundles of make-up with moisturizer, lotion with powder and hair dye with a hairbrush to attract buyers.

Filipinos apparently love these combo treats because they feel that they are getting a bargain from buying two or three things instead of just one.

MARKETING STRATEGY

This was one of the reasons behind Avid Sales Corp.'s marketing strategy of bundling consumer products and electrical appliances to meet the market's demand for entertainment products.

Avid owns several store chains engaged in the marketing of consumer products and electrical appliances. Its brands include Avid Sony Shop, AV Surfer Digital Products Shop, Call Audio-Video Shop, Aiwa Showroom, Best Brands Appliance Center and Beyond Digital Lifestyle Store.

It is affiliated with Solid Corp., which was the exclusive distributor of Sony products in the Philippines before becoming part owner of the new joint venture marketing company, Sony Philippines Inc.

Avid general manager Marcial A. Balgos tells Busines Friday that Avid comes up with unique product "bundles" to attract buyers. It pairs a Sony digital camera, for instance, with a Canon printer so that the customer can immediately print out the images from the camera.

Avid also sells a Sony projection television with JBL speakers for that home theater experience.

Balgos stresses that Avid keeps an eye out for good bargains for the consumer, and this means that they are not limited to selling just Sony products, even if it is affiliated with the Sony group.

Its bundles are also not limited to products, but extends to services as well. A buyer, for instance, can get one-hour editing service for free along with the purchase of a Sony handycam.

"Pairing a service to a product like this is, I think, unique to Avid," Balgos says.

Product bundling is part of Avid's multipronged approach to attract buyers even in these difficult economic times.

Balgos says the most effective by far is the zero-interest promotions on the consumer products, which Avid does through joint campaigns with credit card companies, followed by special price off campaigns on certain models.

The success of these campaigns indicates that price is the major consideration on buyers' minds when they acquire consumer electronics.

Balgos, however, says that Avid strives to be a cut above the rest by offering superior service along with the product.

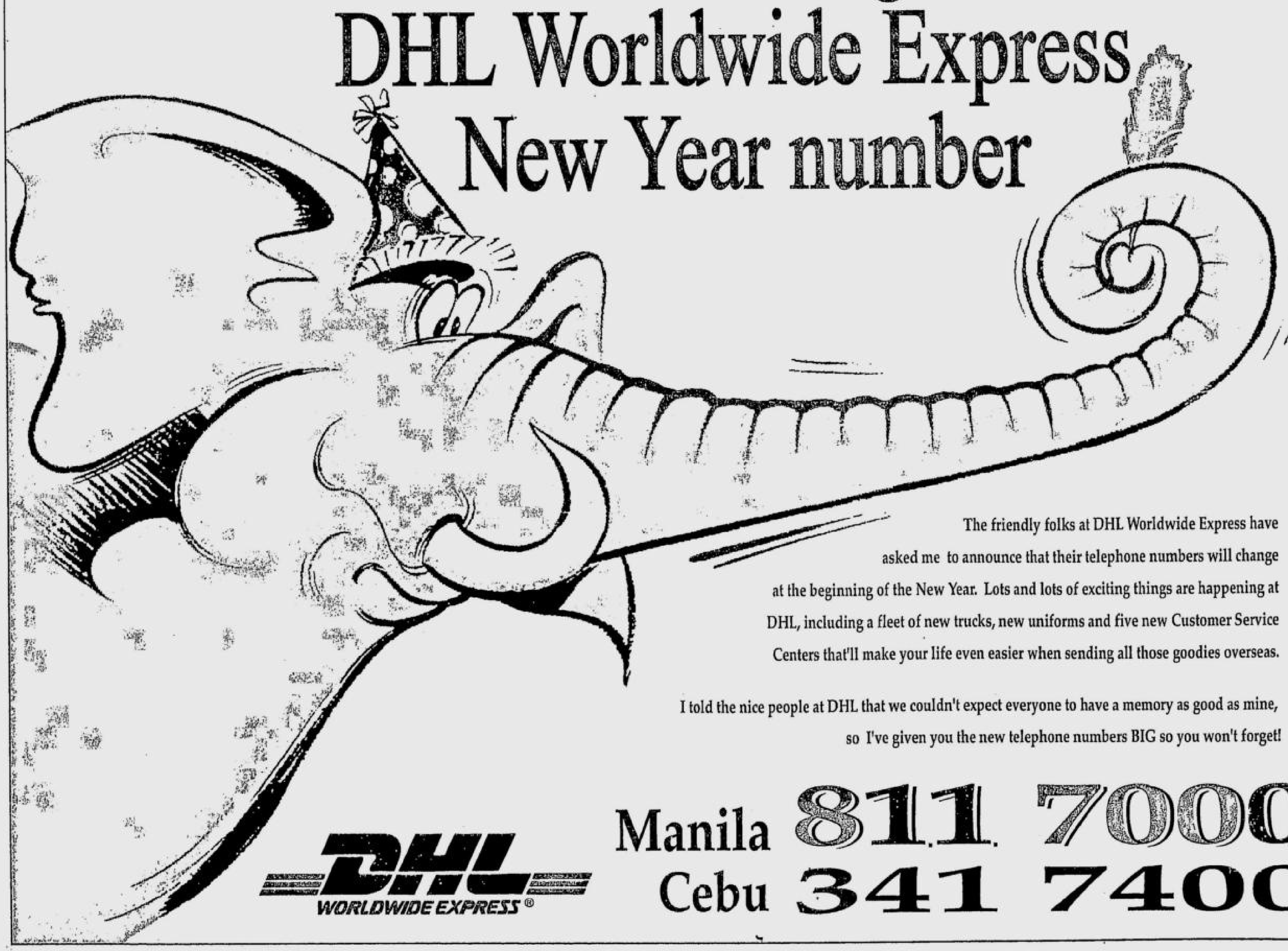
Avid's personnel, for instance, are provided basic information on the different products from the televisions to the DVD players so that they can provide good advice to buyers looking for a new gadget.

"We try to always give a better deal by providing good service so that even if it is the same TV they would like to go to Avid because we can teach them how to use the product and how to maximize the performance," he says.

These various marketing campaigns enabled Avid to post a 20-percent revenue growth last year and 98 percent of its full-year revenue target.

Best sellers were the 25" to 34" television sets and the V8 handycam models, while the laggards were karaoke and component systems as most buyers are switching to digital video disc players.

Balgos says he projects growth this year to taper to 15 percent.



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The friendly folks at DHL Worldwide Express have asked me to announce that their telephone numbers will change at the beginning of the New Year. Lots and lots of exciting things are happening at DHL, including a fleet of new trucks, new uniforms and five new Customer Service Centers that'll make your life even easier when sending all those goodies overseas.

I told the nice people at DHL that we couldn't expect everyone to have a memory as good as mine, so I've given you the new telephone numbers BIG so you won't forget!

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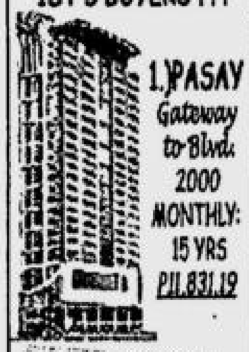

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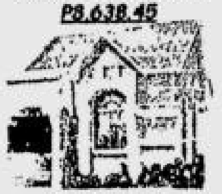

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR. of 2410-16 P. Gil St. Sta Ana Manila. Auction Sale on Jan. 10, 2002, Thursday at 2:30 in the afternoon, respectively, Aug. 12-Sept. 10, 2001. Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

MARA PAWNSHOP I,II,III,IV and Comembo Br. of Makati City. Auction Sale on Jan. 10, 2002, Thurs. at 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 12:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, respectively Aug. 12-Sept. 10, 2001.
Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer.

MI MARA PAWNSHOP OF 251 Quirino Ave. Baclaran, P'que M.M. Auction Sale on Jan. 10, 2002, Thurs. at 4:00 in the afternoon, respectively, Aug. 12-Sept. 10, 2001. Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late Spouses **SISENANDO S. SILVESTRE AND ROSARIO R. SILVESTRE** has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. #466 Page #95 Book XIX Series of 2001 Not. Public HENRY D. ADAZA of Manila (PDI-Dec. 28,2001, Jan. 4, 11, 2002)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Fulgencio A. Reyes has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs on Oct. 1, 2001 under Doc.#419, Page#84, Bk #1, Series of 2001 by Notary Public Rablev Tobias M. Racho of Makati. (PDI-Dec. 28, 2001, Jan. 4, 11, 2002)

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH
Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls - Pray for me.
This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves, shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.
Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail so be sure you really want what you ask.

NOVENA PRAYER TO ST. JUDE
O, HOLY ST. JUDE apostle and martyr, great in virtue, rich in miracles, near in kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present, urgent petition (make your request). In return, I promise to make your name known and cause you to be invoked. Saint Jude, pray for us and all who invoke your aid. Pray this nine times a day for nine consecutive days. On the eighth day your prayers will be answered, for this prayer has never known to fail. Please don't forget to publish this once your wish is granted.

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Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Supreme Court invites interested concessionaires to submit quotations/ proposals for the operation of Canteen located at the Multi-Purpose Building of the New Supreme Court Compound Padre Faura Street, Manila, that will provide canteen services to more or less 2,500 employees.

Interested concessionaires may obtain the necessary pre-qualification requirements from the Secretariat Committee on Bids, Office of Administrative Services and must be personally submitted by the authorized representative at 2:00 p.m. on **January 18, 2002** at the 3rd Division Conference Room, Supreme Court, at the same time and date the pre-qualification shall be conducted. Bid proposal forms and Terms and Conditions shall be issued to qualified bidders by the COB upon payment of P200.00 pesos which is not refundable. The pre-bid conference shall be held on **January 23, 2002** at 2:00 p.m. at the same place.

Only bid of pre-qualified bidders who participated in the pre-bid conference will be accepted and opened at the time of the bidding on **January 30, 2002** at 10:00 a.m. at the Multi-Purpose Hall, 4th Floor Annex Building, Supreme Court, to be witnessed by the bidders or their representatives.

The Supreme Court reserves the right to reject any or all quotations, and/ or proposals, waive any defect of informality therein, accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI- Jan. 4, 2002)

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
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Pasig City, Philippines

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Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education through the Bureau of Nonformal Education is inviting all printers to the Printing and Delivery of the Translated Basic Literacy Materials, 250 copies/module/dialect (7 dialects). The approved budget for this project is P5,490,870.00.

All interested printers must submit a Letter of Intent before obtaining bidding documents starting **January 7, 2002** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Room 112-A, Mabini Building, DECS Complex, Pasig City or visit the DECS website at http://www.decs.gov.ph.

A pre-bid conference will be held on **January 17, 2002**, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Building I, DECS Complex, Pasig City. The submission and opening of bids will be on **January 31, 2002** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DECS-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO S. PANGAN**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DECS-BAC

(PDI – Jan. 4 & 5, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of the Interior and Local Government
National Police Commission
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE
PNPCS Canvass and Award Committee
Camp Crame, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

The **PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE COMPUTER SERVICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE** invites all interested **PNP Accredited Suppliers/ Manufacturers** to participate in the bidding of the following:

1. Supply and Installation of **Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) with Radio Base System**
2. One (1) Lot FED Computerization Project
3. One (1) Lot TMG Computerization Project
4. Magic V9 e Developer (Runtime and Deployment) and Microsoft

The detailed specification of these products will be released during the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **Wednesday, 9 January 2002 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning** at the Conference Room of the PNP Computer Service in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

For more details, please call up PCI Lamps at Tel. Nos. 725-5108 or 415-1534.

(Sgd.) **PSSUPT CLAUDIO C CABREROS**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Jan. 4, 5 & 6, 2002)

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John 14:6

CHIEF ENG'R. VICENTE M. JUNDEZ

Of #93 Esteban Luna, BF Homes, Parañaque City

Has serenely joined the Lord in His Kingdom
on January 3, 2002 at the age of 66.

His bereaved wife **ROSITA**; his children **JAYVIC** and **ROSEMARIEVIC**; his daughter and son-in-laws **SHERYL** and **WILLY**; his grandchildren **CHLOE** and **DARYL KRISTOPHER**; his brothers and sisters; his brothers and sisters-in-laws; his nephews and niece request the kind readers to please pray for his eternal rest.

His body lies in state at Father Willmann Suite at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Parañaque City.

Funeral Mass will be on Tuesday, January 8, 2002 at 1:00 p.m.

Interment will immediately follow.

ENGR. PACIFICO DUMAY BUCALON

Of Cantilan, Surigao Del Sur

has serenely joined the Lord in His kingdom
on January 2, 2002 at the age of 66.

His bereaved wife **NEMESIA**; his children **VIRGINIA SANTA**, **NOEL** and **ANNASELLAINE**; his in-laws **HERMINIGILDO**, **MARITES** and **GERRY MARIE**; his grandchildren **JAN PAOLO** and **PATRICA SHAINE**; and other relatives request the kind readers to please pray for his eternal rest.

His body lies in state at the Royal Chapel of the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels in Sucat, Parañaque City.

Funeral Mass will be on Saturday, January 5, 2002 at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel at 8:00 p.m.

Interment will be on Sunday at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque at 2:00 p.m.

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Her children Felicitas, Perlita & Pepito, Emerita, Estrel & Doming, Tina Lolda, Ponciano, Jr., and Remy, Aida & Chris; and grandchildren request the relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Avenue, (Sucat Road), Parañaque City.

Interment will be at the Manila Memorial Park on Sunday, January 6, 2002 after the 8:00 AM Mass.

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INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Manigo

Q. Why is the word *manigo* used almost exclusively for the phrase *'Manigong Bagong Taon?'*

A. *Manigo* means prosperous or favorable, so when you say *'Manigong Bagong Taon,'* you're wishing 'Have a Prosperous New Year.' The word used to denote the first sale of a store on its opening day, an event the owner hopes will augur well for the days, months, and year ahead. The business aspect gradually gave way to any good beginning that will prosper, and it is in this general sense that *manigo* came to be attached, quite exclusively, to our traditional New Year greeting.

For the Record. How to say 'Happy New Year' in other languages: French - *Bonne Annee* (bun ah-nay); German - *Ein glückliches neues Jahr* (ine gluck-likh-ess noy-ess yahr); Italian - *Felice capo d'anno* (feh-lee-cheh kah-poh dahn-noh); Spanish *Feliz Año Nuevo* (feh-lees ah-nyoh nweh-voh); Swedish - *Gott nytt år* (goht noot or); Yiddish - *A gliklekhn nay-yor* (a gleck-lukh-khn ny-yor).

Past Forward. This day in 1961: Apprentice barbers in Copenhagen, Denmark, finally end a strike which began in 1938, the longest-running (33 years) labor dispute in world history.

WORD WATCH

Manicure : from the Latin *manus,* 'hand,' + *cura,* 'care.'

PDI – January 4, 2002

BUSINESS Friday
MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

Who's afraid of the new economic order?

By MYRNA RODRIGUEZ-CO

CAN small and medium enterprises (SMEs) survive and grow in a free trade environment, unprotected by distance, tariff, quota, and other shields?

One is tempted to answer they should, that they simply have no choice—as one imagines how devastated the national economic life would be if SMEs should stumble rather than rise up to the challenges of the new economic order. SMEs not only dominate the economy in sheer number but also contribute solidly to employment, income, output, regional development and innovation.

But the reality is that some SMEs—the timorous, the weak, the slow moving, the unprepared—will fall by the wayside.

Globalization is defined as the integration of national markets into a single world marketplace, where goods, services, financial capital, and technology flow in and out of countries virtually unhampered.

But there is another way of defining globalization, according to Melito S. Salazar Jr. of the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and formerly of the Board of Investments. And this is in terms of the activities that the various economic players ought to do to prepare themselves for it.

Implied in this is that SMEs should themselves take decisive measures to get ready to play globally—and play to win!

How not to stumble

These measures relate to a number of critical aspects internal or external to a business firms' operations, including:

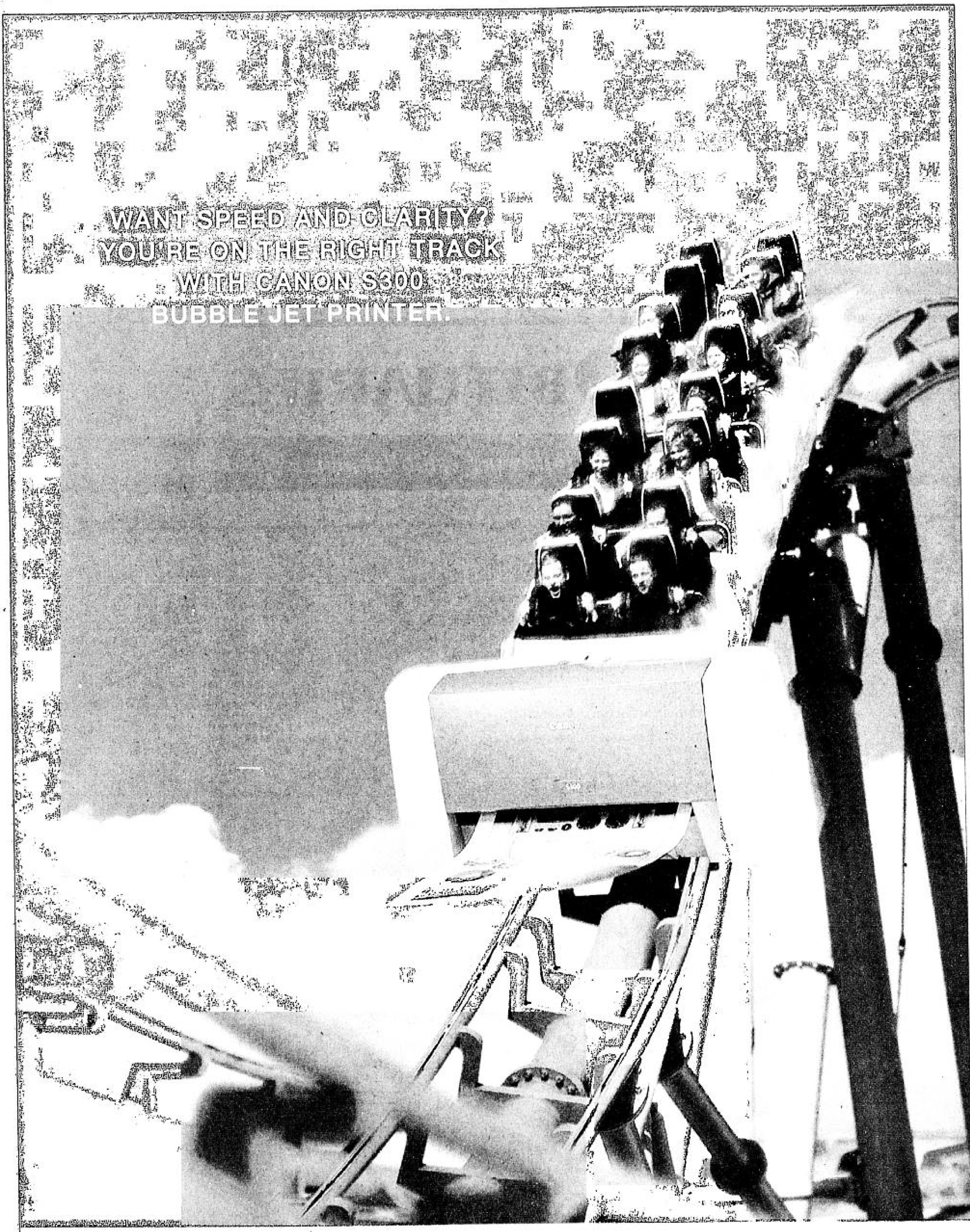
The environment. Globalization is bringing the concerns of consumers about the environment to the rest of the world, not the least to those who own and manage business enterprises. SMEs, long reputed to be low in complying with environmental prescriptions, are now expected to do business with a nurturing environmental mindset. This implies adoption of new and clear technologies and keeping abreast with information on environmental concerns.

Productivity aspects

Standardization. Another im-

WHO'S/ B5

GLOBALIZATION



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Reducing tax payments: Finding the middle ground

By MENCHIE M. TORMON
SGV & CO.

TAX-FILES

IT MAY sound too good to be true but there is a way for a person's entire tax liability to be wiped out with very little money exchanging hands.

The truism that taxes are the lifeblood of the nation has not deterred tax authorities from being benevolent to taxpayers depending on the case. In fact, the Tax Code itself authorizes the commissioner of Internal Revenue to compromise a taxpayer's tax liability on two grounds: when the assessment is of doubtful validity or when the taxpayer is financially unable to pay the tax.

Not all tax liabilities can be compromised. Nonetheless, the rules allow compromise on delinquent accounts, cases under administrative protest and cases covered by pre-assessment notices. Collection cases filed in courts and civil tax cases being disputed before any lower court all the way to the Supreme Court can also be compromised. Even criminal violations can be compromised except those already filed in court and those involving criminal tax fraud.

Doubtful validity

No internal revenue officer is infallible. That is why no one can be expected to make accurate assessments of tax liabilities all the time.

An assessment is said to be of doubtful in several instances.

One is when it results from a jeopardy assessment. A jeopardy assessment is a tax assessment which was assessed without the benefit of complete or partial audit by an authorized revenue officer.

An assessment is also doubtful if it is arbitrary in nature, appearing to be based on presumptions and there is reason to believe that it is lacking in legal and/or factual basis.

Some omissions on the taxpayer's part when protesting an assessment can also be compromised based on doubtful validity, particularly when:

- The taxpayer failed to file an administrative protest upon failure to receive the assessment notice;
- The taxpayer failed to file a request for reinvestigation within 30 days from receipt of final assessment notice; and
- The taxpayer failed to elevate to the CTA an adverse decision of the commissioner or his authorized representative, in some cases, within 30 days from receipt.

However, in all these three cases, there must always be a reason to believe that the assessment lacks legal and/or factual basis.

Financial incapacity

Financial incapacity is self-explanatory. After all, why beat a dead horse? The government settles for a fraction of the tax when it is aware that it can squeeze nothing more from the taxpayer.

The offer to compromise based on financial incapacity may be accepted when:

- The taxpayer's capital is impaired by 50 percent;
- The taxpayer is suffering from a net worth deficit
- The corporation ceased operation or is already dissolved; and
- The taxpayer has been granted by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or by any competent tribunal a moratorium or suspension of payments to creditors, or otherwise declared bankrupt or insolvent.

There can also be a compromise when the taxpayer is a compensation income earner with no other source of income and whose monthly salary is P10,500 or less, or has no other assets, other than his family home.

However, to ensure that the government will not be duped by cunning taxpayers, the rules provide that any offer for compromise settlement by reason of financial incapacity will not be considered unless and until the taxpayer waives in writing his privilege of the secrecy of bank deposits under RA 1404.

The waiver then authorizes the commissioner to inquire into the bank deposits of the taxpayer.

The middle ground

The tax payable depends on whether the

REDUCING/ B5

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An old soul's young abode

(Story on page C2)

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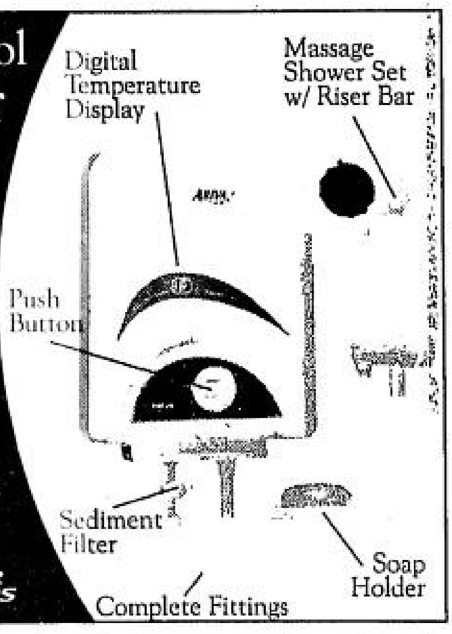
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RP horoscope for 2002

(Story on page C3)

NY makes Giselle more than just a pretty face

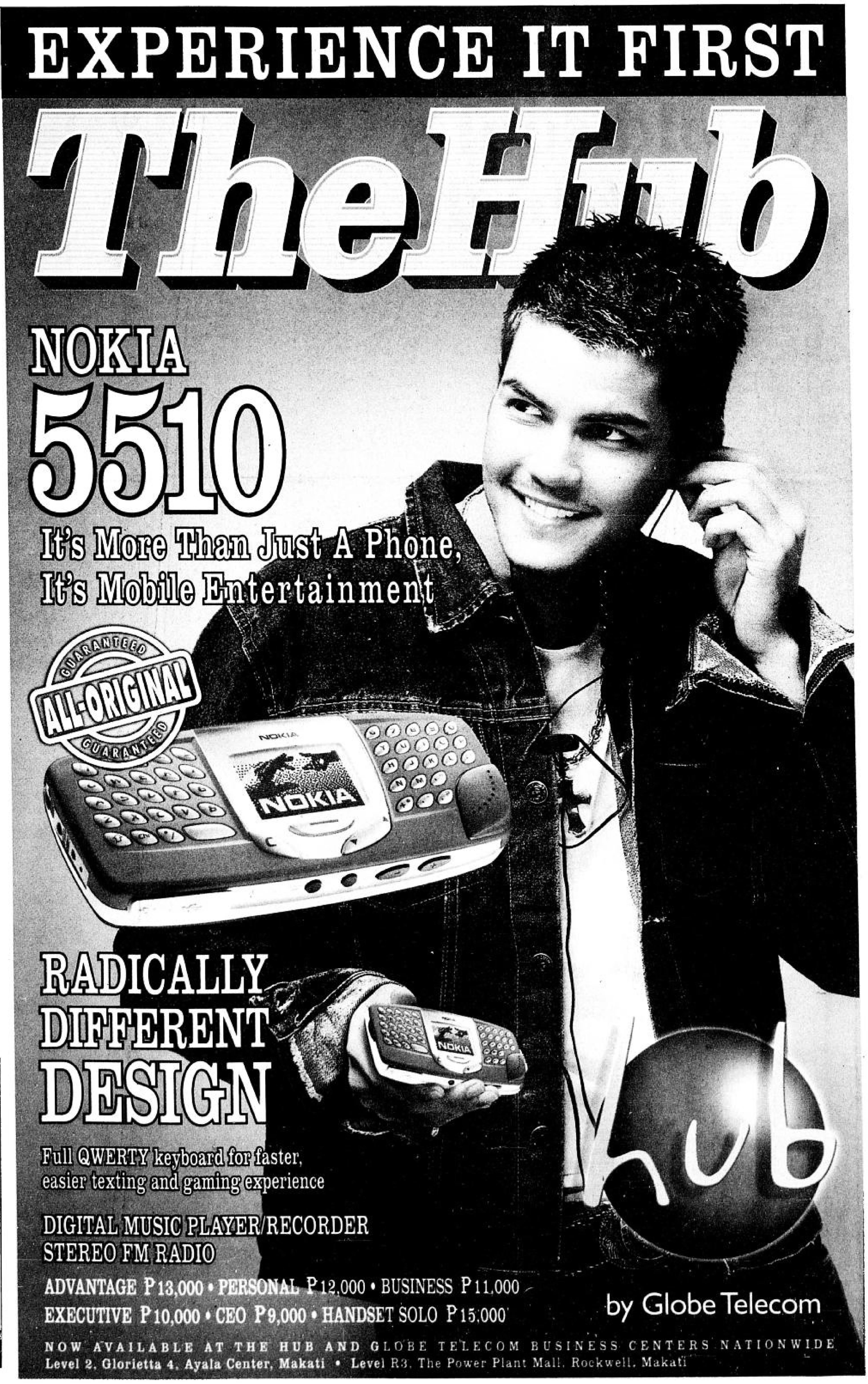
(Story on page C4)

Clean up, clear out

(Story on page C5)

Fashion goes theatrical

(Story on page C7)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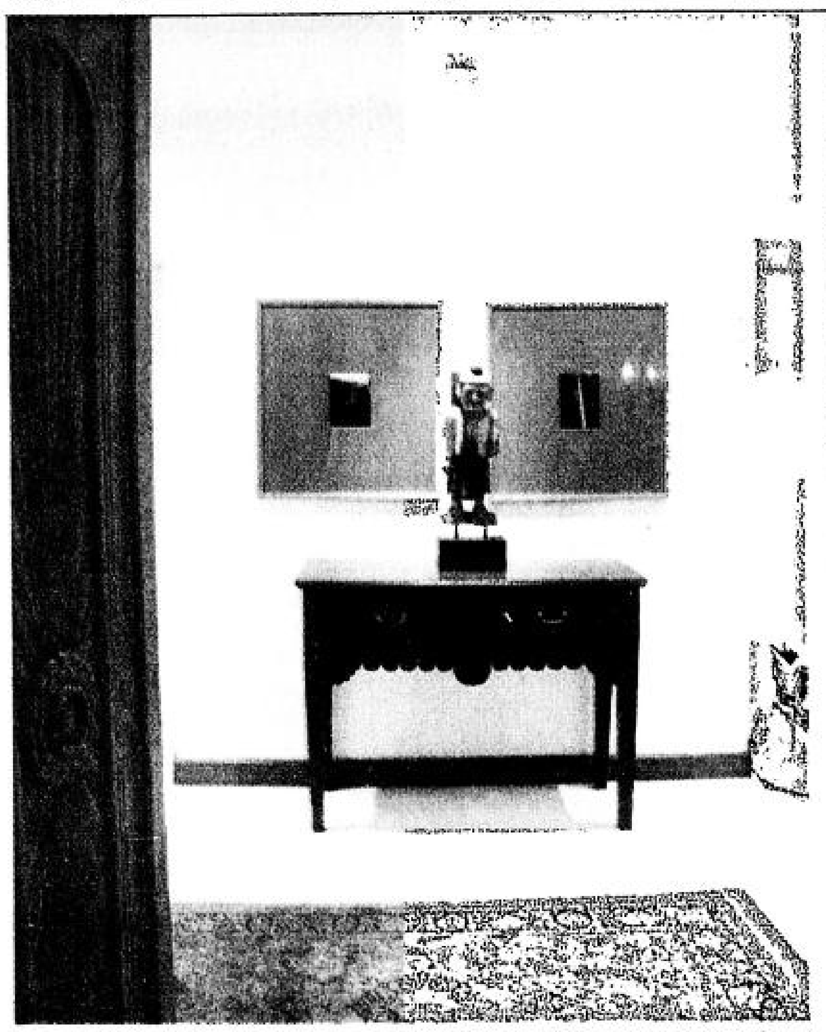
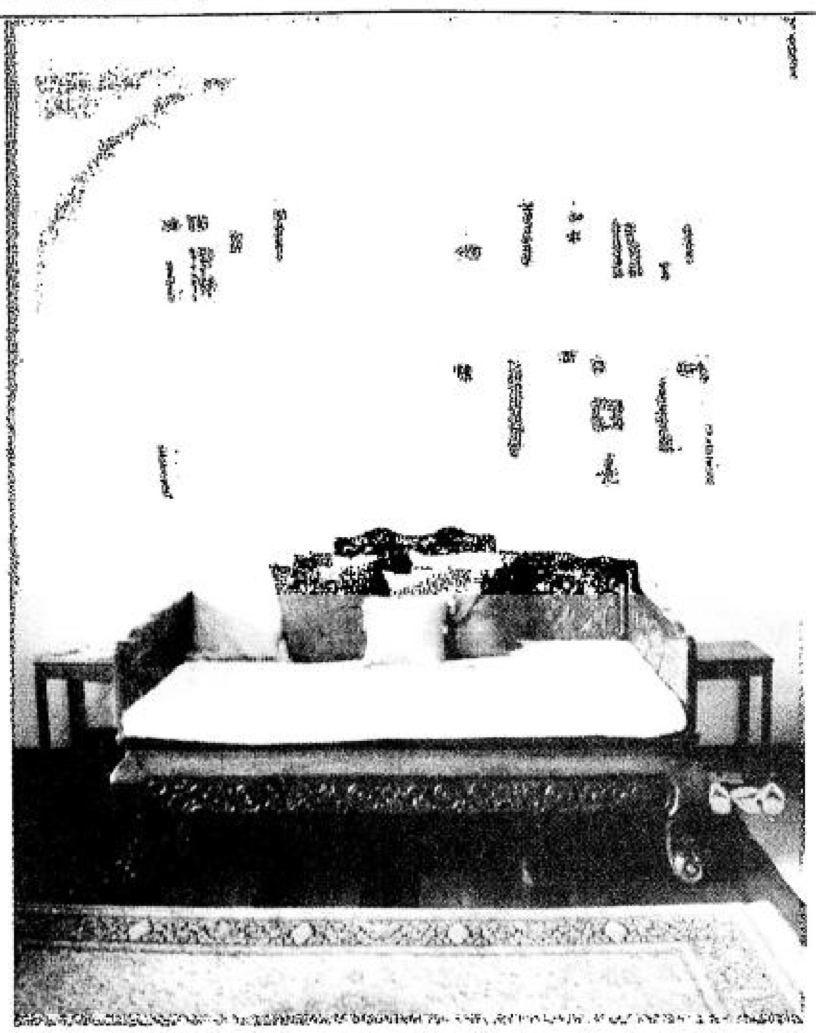
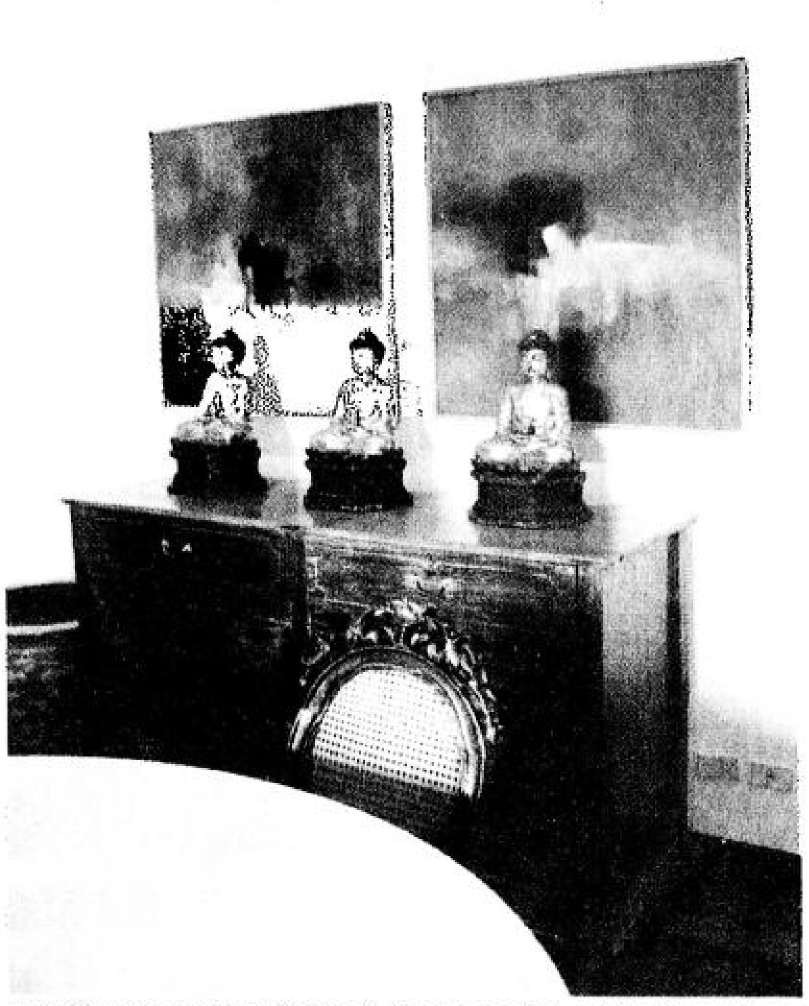


CAMBODIANS' idea of a scarecrow fashioned from wood is a focal point in the foyer. The distressed statue is mounted on a black wooden base atop an altar table made of *balayong*.



CHINESE-INSPIRED day bed made of *balayong* belongs to a rich turn-of-the-century Chinese-Filipino. Behind it is a pair of panels of two different acrylic paintings on paper that the woman combined.



BRASS and copper Buddhas of Japanese origin before Concepcion's bold acrylic pieces

An old soul's young abode

By Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina
Pictorial direction Albert Avellana

THE OWNER of this Makati condo enjoys a modern lifestyle that includes business, traveling and keeping fit with a personal trainer in her private gym. Yet, she is drawn to objects with character such as antique furniture and art pieces sourced here and abroad.

"I must have been an old soul," says the pedigreed owner who wishes to be unnamed. "I'm not at all conservative, but I really love old Asian art. I've been collecting them for over 30 years now."

So, this woman must have started when she was, what, 5? She lets out a hearty chuckle: "Exposure sure has a lot do with it." The woman grew up in a Quezon City home surrounded by a mélange of antique and heirloom pieces from various parts of the world. But unlike her more conservative parents, she developed a knack for juxtaposing the old with the new.

Thus, a part of an old church's carved ceiling, faded and distressed with time, is adjacent to a bright abstract painting by Orville Tiamson in the foyer. It took her an immense amount of cajoling to convince the artist to part with his award-wining acrylic piece.

"My friend and I were literally knocking on the doors one day in Angono until we stumbled upon his painting," she says. "He finally agreed to sell it provided I loan it to him every time he has a show."

Amorsolo has no place in this house. Rather than go for figurative paintings, the woman prefers abstract pieces that, she says, blend well with her antique sculptures of Buddha heads, pagan idols and vases of various shapes, makes and colors. "I find them more interesting and relaxing," she says of abstract art. Aside from Tiamson and Legaspi, she also has a number of Lao Lian Bens, Gus Albors and Concepcions in acrylic. "The colors and textures add warmth to certain corners. Best of all they complement rather than clash with my pieces."

The Lao Lian Ben mural by the living room wall is a commissioned work. "It's the artist's idea of me," she says of the dark splashes of acrylic on white canvass. "I haven't the slightest idea what he means."

The woman has also taken several steps to depart from the foyer's homogeneous look by substituting the de rigueur dark parquet tiles that came with the unit with slabs of off-white marble. A built-in door had to give way in favor of carved double doors from an old house in Vigan. The walls between the double doors were substituted with frosted glass. The bedroom door also underwent a similar transformation. This time less intricate double doors from Bacolod took the original's place.

Ideal pieces

Indeed, this woman's search for ideal pieces has brought her far and wide. Most of her antique furniture pieces—from altar tables, *aparador*, chairs and dining tables—are made of *balayong* from Batangas. A few were fashioned from *narra* and *molave*. The woman is partial to *balayong* for several reasons.

"I love the feel of exposed, distressed wood," she says. "I'm not very fond of coating a piece with varnish to alter the hue. I like it weather-beaten and low-maintenance. That's why I'm partial to *balayong*. It naturally comes in varying hues."

She also enjoys finding new uses for old objects. Two *aparador* made of *balayong*, for instance, one a conventional piece, the other, an art deco-inspired cabinet used for keeping priestly vestments, now hold the woman's numerous bags and linens. A marble-topped dresser made of *narra* now features various art objects. She also takes pride in several heirloom pieces such as a Chinese-inspired daybed by the living room that used to display her dolls.

From Southeast Asia

Most of her art pieces were sourced mostly from the Philippines and Southeast Asia, particularly Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. Thanks to the range of products found in the Thai capital, the woman need not brave unstable Cambodia to look for ideal pieces.

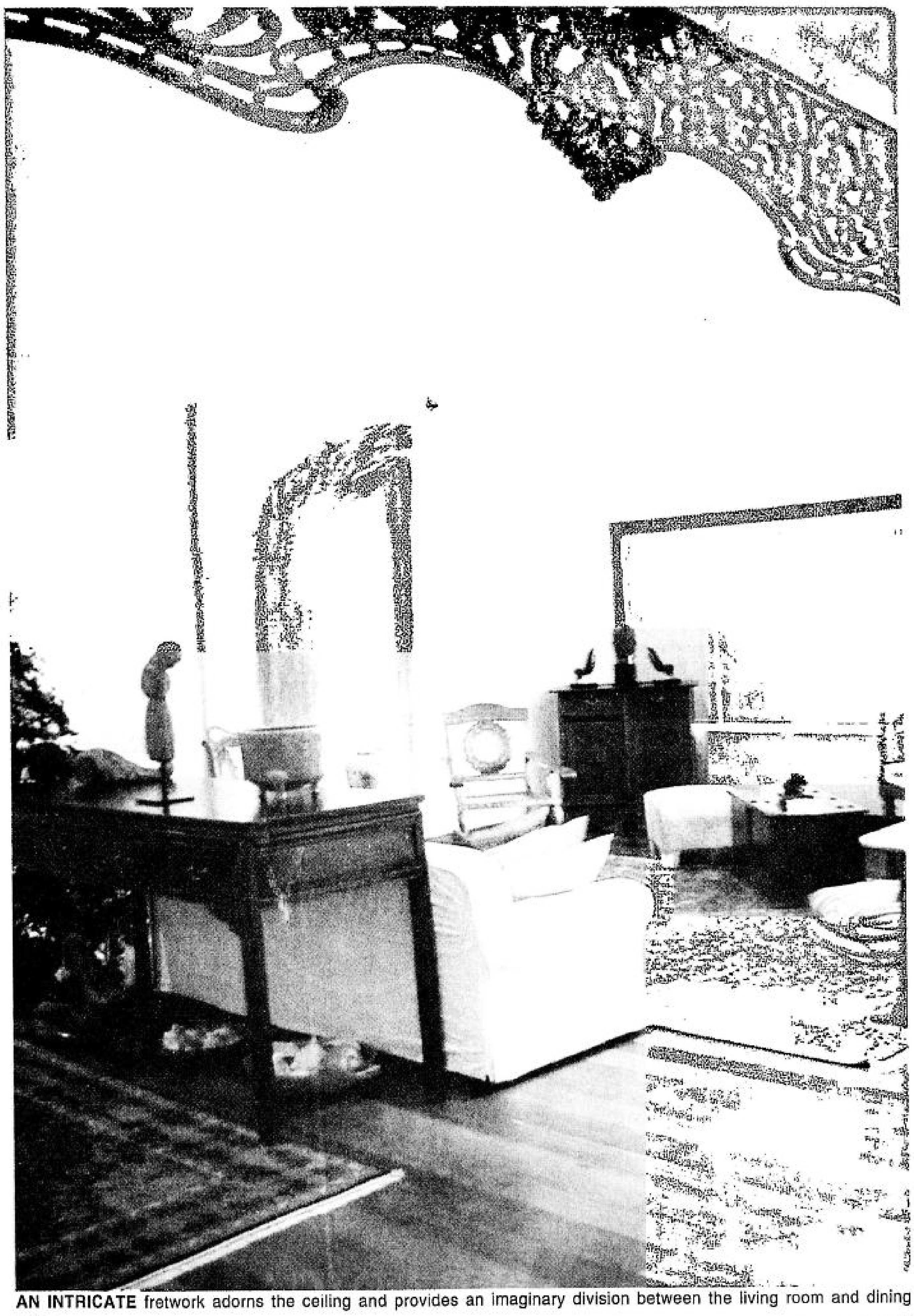
"I love Thailand, especially Bangkok!" she lights up. "You can find almost everything there." One of her favorite pieces, for instance, is a nondescript scarecrow from Cambodia in the foyer. The 2-ft long figure, from its base to its head, was sourced from Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand. Its nose was chipped, while its torso was cracked in many places due to exposure to the elements.

"It may not be striking by itself," she says, "but I find it interesting." She mounted it on a black wooden base and set it on top of a wooden altar table, thus making it one of the foyer's focal points.

She likewise gave a pair of faux Doric columns from India a new twist. After having the semi-circular wooden pieces fused, she had it mounted on a base and displayed in an alcove by the dining room. Another alcove by the living room features two wooden Ifugao figures making love in an unconventional position. "I wonder if the photographer took a shot of this," she says with a chuckle.

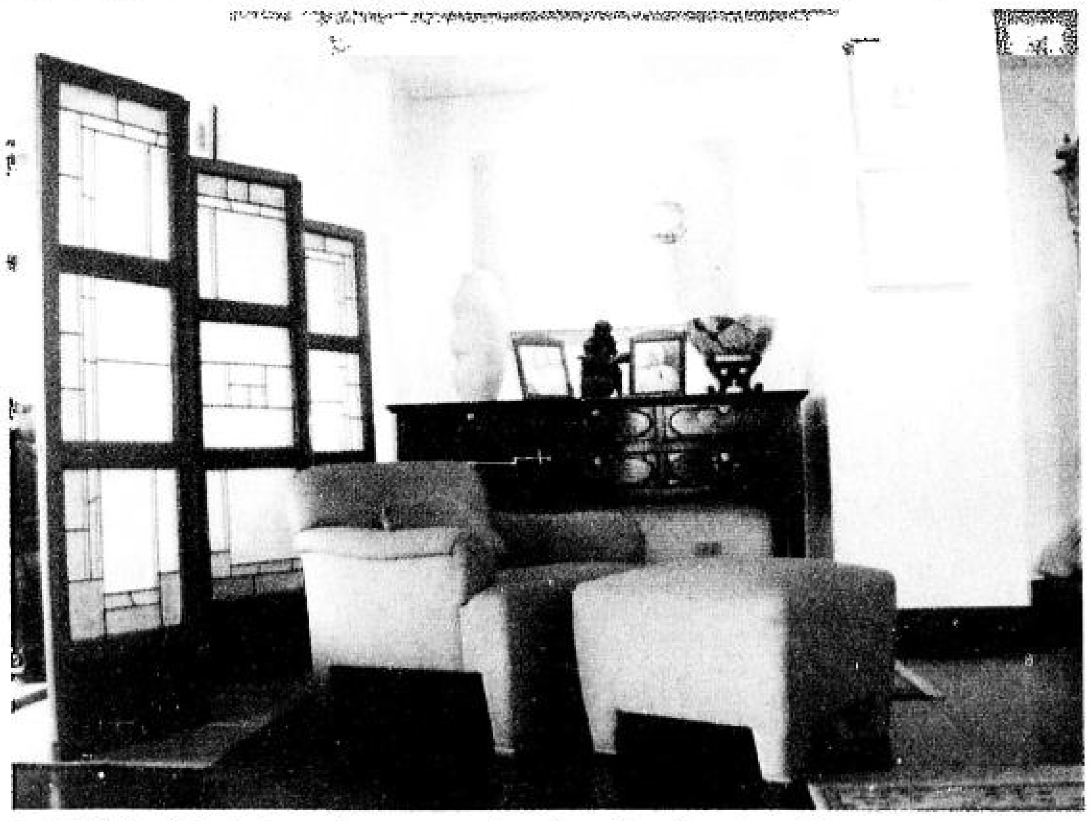
Of course, she concedes, many of these pieces are now worth their weight in gold. But the prospect of such pieces appreciating with time must never be a primary motivation to collect. "People must collect something they really like." Most important, the pieces should reveal facets of the owner's personality, and not the depths of her pockets.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

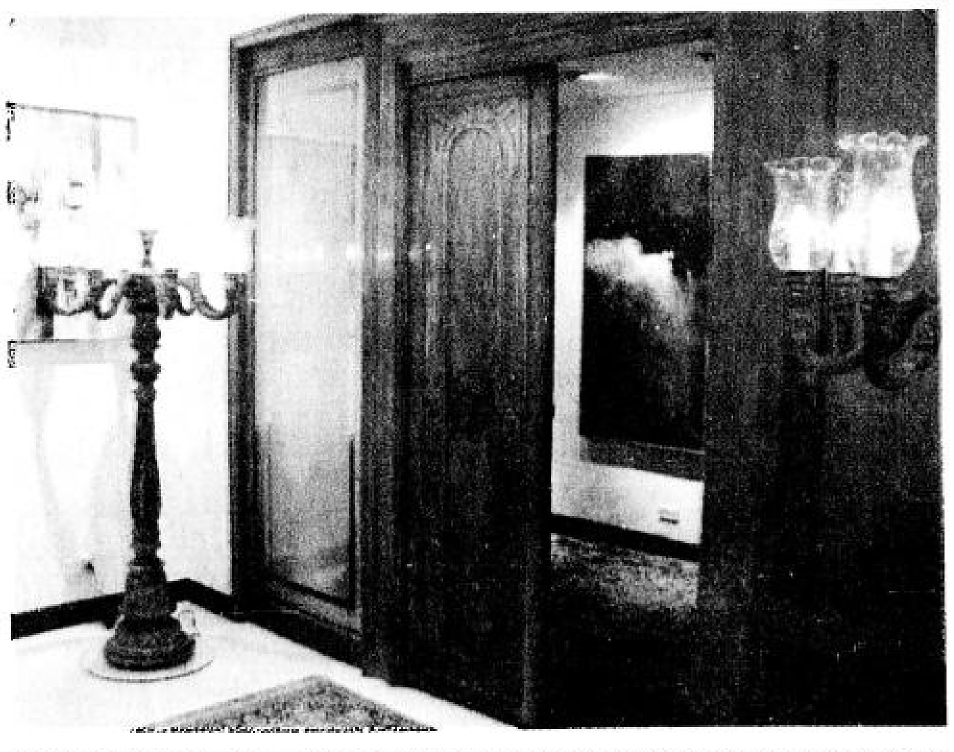


AN INTRICATE fretwork adorns the ceiling and provides an imaginary division between the living room and dining area.

The resident of a Makati condo unit shows her pedigree and her well-traveled taste through interiors that counterpoint the past and the present



A CORNER of the bedroom features a series of wood and two-toned glass panels that double as a divider. It used to form part of a sliding window in its previous life. A Chinese drawer features an off-white marble vase by Impy Pilapil, a *tuba* maker fashioned from clay and an Imari vase from Japan. Lao Lian Ben's acrylic paintings were merged into one and now hang in the bedroom alcove.



THEN AND NOW. The mistress of the house had the original doors replaced with antique double doors from Vigan. Sheets of frosted glass on both sides of the door succeed in breaking the monotony. An acrylic painting behind the cluster of *verina* adds a modern touch to the foyer.

2002 FORECAST

Age of Aquarius augurs well for personal and national success

By Georgina C. Solina
Contributor

People will turn to spirituality, solitude and sharing. But troubles lie ahead, such as vice, immorality, male aggression and inexplicable disease

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

IT will be the year of kinship. For many key events will involve brothers, sisters and close relatives. Likewise, important occurrences will consist of travel, mental work and writings.

With the Sun conjunct Saturn in the Solar Return chart based on June 12, the republic's birth date, it will be a year of moral and physical solitude. It will also be a year of worries, if one does not exercise prudence particularly in love and business. The health of the people will be affected, since Saturn rules the 12th house of karmic liabilities, which prevents the people from having pleasant, trouble-free days.

Nonetheless, Uranus in the 1st house of the Filipino identity promises a subtle change in the consciousness of the people. Since Saturn and Uranus are in favorable position to the Aries Moon in the Independence chart of June 12, Uranus positively linked to Sun promises an unexpected but favorable development on all levels—economic, mental and spiritual, etc. But the people must not be in a hurry for results.

Some illusions harbored by the masses will be difficult to carry out. Neptune rules the 2nd house of finances. This usually calls for the purification of motives in pursuing financial objectives. Be careful with your finances, as you can easily be deceived. Avoid expanding businesses or building high-rise structures beyond limited resources. Neptune here always indicates an intense interior life, anxieties and fears.

Brisk activity in government circles is expected, especially travel by officials. But there will be disgrace to public office and scandal in high places and in military circles. There will be better relations with foreign powers, but some alliances will need to be modified. Despite troublesome complications in foreign relations, peace and prosperity are possible. The time is favorable for financial and trade negotiations as all countries are affected by the global economic downturn.

Sharing

The annual Ascendant in Aquarius emphasizes the importance of social relationships. Aquarius is the sign of friends and even shared profits in business organizations or cooperatives. Aquarius will bring joy to people who promote universal love, compassion, and wealth sharing.

The annual Midheaven in the 12th house indicates a year of ordeals in career. It also shows the dangers of libel and slander and the difficulties of finding and keeping a job. Pluto's location in the 11th house of hopes and objectives indicates that the fulfillment of plans depend not only on individual efforts, but also on fortunate circumstances outside the country. The stars also show vice and immorality in society, worsening illegitimacy, scandals in show business, crimes against women and children, and more gambling.

The health of the people should be guarded. There will be increased dependency on illicit drugs. There will be labor unrest and high unemployment. But most people will assume a progressive attitude and try to alleviate their conditions. There will be disputes in the education sector. The growth of science and technology will be stimulated.

It will also be a favorable year for literary work and for teaching children mystical and profound concepts. Note the craze over the "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings" films. They will inspire the adults to return to spirituality.

Mars conjunct Moon in the 6th house of health indicates excess, particularly in food and diet. The increase of pollutants indicates troubled relationships. This conjunction seems to be more damaging to women, so women should guard against male aggression and dominance to minimize sex crimes and child abuse.

The government run by a female may have a good idea of where to proceed, but it may encounter damaging obstacles to get there. The Sun-Saturn-North Node conjunctions expose age-old gender issues. The North Node is also a boost to the Philippines, which should endow spirituality to action. This energy is now on Earth since the healing planet Chiron was discovered in 1977. The only question is how quickly we will integrate it into our national life.

Bad year for men

It may be a bad year for men, as they may tend to develop illnesses difficult to diagnose. The good news is that the restrictive effect of Sun-Saturn conjunct can produce discipline on the Filipino people and provide them with advancement and improvement. The restrictive indicator (Saturn) on personal plans and ambitions through sickness and other difficulties actually bode a more lasting positive influence on the shaping of the nation's destiny.

Many of the youth are manifesting Aquarian qualities. People now try to instill solitude in their lives, reaching out to the Divine through prayer and meditation. Peace, purity and prosperity will resonate in the expansive and progressive vibrations of Moon conjunct Jupiter in the national Solar Return chart of 2002. People can then enjoy an improvement in their fortunes; they will get monetary returns, appreciable gifts, and other material benefits. Even people's health will improve, provided everyone exercises care and prudence in the use of their energies. They should never run into excess so as not to incur illnesses or troubles in their career, business, investments and employment.

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THE MANY faces of Giselle. Asymmetric top with ostrich feather

NY makes Giselle more than just a pretty face

BY MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ
PHOTOS BY PATRICK UY
PAGE DESIGN BY MARLONE RUBIO

GISELLE Töngi was an actress in a hurry. From the age of 16 to 22, she starred in more than two dozen movies, hosted three TV shows, graced several magazine covers, was touted as one of Manila's most beautiful women and the ultimate party girl. With her Eurasian looks, this headturner thought that she could land a role in New York with a mere bat of an eyelash. After spending 18 months in the fast lane, life has taught the 23-year-old to slow down.

"Manila had become a routine—a noontime variety show, a dance show and a sitcom. I was hosting gigs. I was going out at night, meeting up with the same people. I never missed a big event," she says. The habitual pattern had deadened her response to the rich stimuli of the world and the more she experienced them, the more they tended to become stale.

"I got burned out. I was doing everything like a robot. I felt I was stagnating," she says. She had fallen into a comfort zone that kept her from developing as an artist.

Last Sept. 15, 2000, she jumped over the fence of her comfort zone by flying to New York. There she fully experienced life, and thus learned and grew. Most of her time was occupied by classes in acting, voice and dance and auditioning for commercials and film roles. There she had her reality check.

Being beautiful

From the start of her career, Giselle's rise was effortless. Back then, plum roles in Filipino movies landed on Giselle's lap without any effort and benefit of formal training.

"I became an actor without studying any technique. 'Oh, pretty face, here, do this movie.' It was a big trial and error for me," she says.

However, pulchritude did not guarantee good review. Giselle received a lot of flak from critics, among them columnist and entertainment editor Nestor Torre. Giselle reviewed her past movies and took note of the critics' feedback.

"Nestor Torre said I shouted a lot. First it was wrong casting. At 18, I was playing mother to a 7-year-old. Although I wore a lot of makeup to make me look older, the maturity as an actor wasn't there. All the confrontation scenes with my husband, played by Aga Muhlach, were earsplitting. When you're upset as a kid you shout," she explains.

"I regret being so impatient with my career. When I was offered the role, I knew that it was a stretch as far as character and age. But I wanted to be paired with Aga, and it was a big film by Chito Roño. I realized that you couldn't rush a career. Here everybody is in a hurry. Everybody wants a piece of the action."

In acting classes in the United States, she had to unlearn the over-the-top acting she acquired in Philippine movies. "What I've learned is that acting is reacting. Acting is the ability to live through imaginary circumstances. In a scene, I play it like it's real. I never really knew that. I want to bring it to a higher level. I can do films here. I just want to say that I want to have the right to say I'm an *artiste.*"

Giselle is out to prove the triumph of substance over superficialities. Although her looks opened the doors for her in Manila, tongues wagged with envy and branded her as conceited.

"It can be a big disadvantage. Onscreen, because you're beautiful, your acting is downplayed [and you are not] being recognized for your talent. I'm not going to say that it hasn't helped. Sure, I love being photographed. I work really well with photographers. But I guess there's a stigma that if you're beautiful you're a bitch because you act superior. In reality you're just being yourself but people think: 'She's swell-headed because she's so like this or that.' You're judged right away. I can deal with it if they can deal with me," she says.

"My friends were talking about it. They said just because you're beautiful they would want to hate you. They want to see you fail. It's more of a plight."

Giselle isn't bothered by comments about her figure. On the contrary, her stomach is flat as an ironing board as she models a dress by Victor Alfaro for the INQUIRER shoot.

"When you're thin, people say, '*Ay*, you're skinny.' When you've gained weight, they say, '*Ay*! You've put on weight.' You can never please anybody. They will always say, you're too thin or too fat. It's what you think. It's how you feel about yourself."

In Manila, she was always dolled up to keep up with her celebrity image. In New York, she enjoys the luxury of walking without any makeup, clad in jogging pants and shod in sneakers. However, when she's dressed up for an audition, people would stop on the streets.

"I think it's my attitude, more than anything else," she says.

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Rejections

During her first four months in New York, Giselle joined some 40 auditions. She realized that just to try out had a technique to it. "After an audition I couldn't sleep at night. Did I get the role? After I found out I didn't get the role I'd get down and get depressed. Sometimes you're not the one they're looking for. They get specific like 'blue eyes' or 'oozing with sex appeal' or 'looking more dangerous than what you think'. That's the character breakdown. It's happened so many times that I was good at audition, but I wasn't right for the part. [But] from that audition, the casting director remembered me and she had another project and had me audition again. It's building a network," explains Giselle.

"In the beginning it was tough. Here I never had to audition for anything. But I knew that because I love watching Actor's Studio. I remember the dean of the school saying, 'Actors must have an appetite for rejection.' As actor you have to pay your dues. You have to be at the right time and right place. It's destiny what's in store for you. In the beginning I thought there was something wrong with me or that I wasn't doing well. Later on, I figured that after I did an audition, I'd just throw it out the window.

"If I got the job it would be a bonus, if not I'd move on. If you get stuck on one audition and another audition comes, you feel low. It's perseverance. There has to be one role for you."

Giselle thought that her nightlife in New York would be hyperactive. On the contrary, she experienced periods of introversion. "I'd sit in the park, watch movies, stay at home, cook, clean and do laundry. I'm in a relationship right now. We'd go to a bar for a couple of drinks. It wasn't like I had expected," she says.

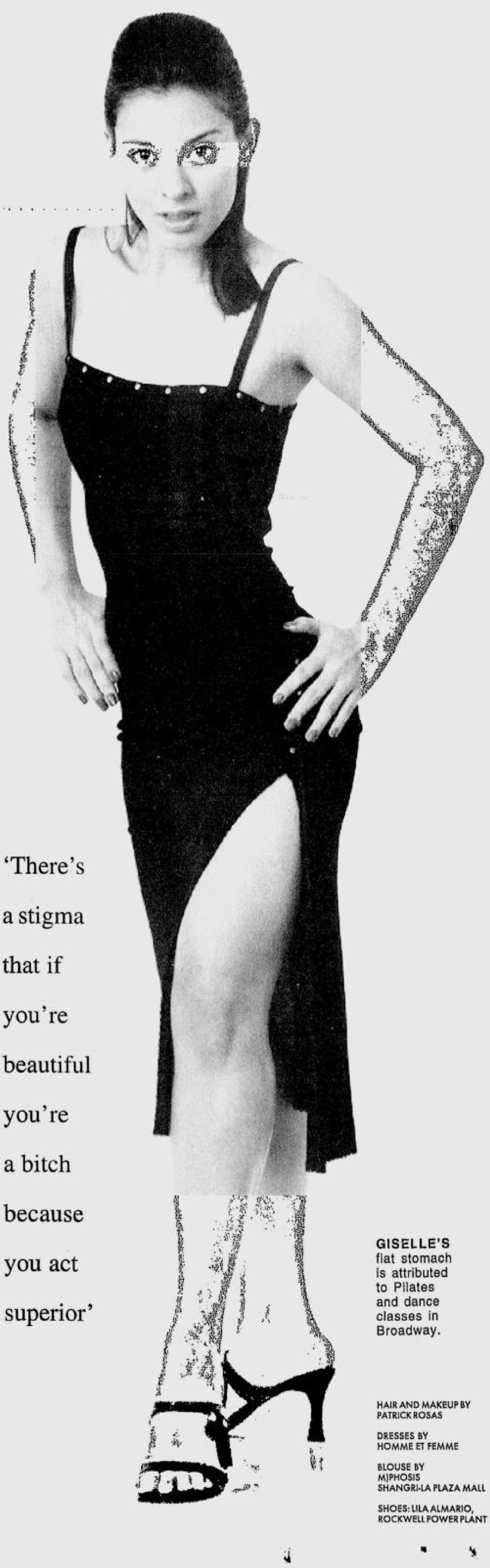
At first the moments of solitude were daunting. Eventually, she benefited from the introspection.

"I was scared to be alone. I was scared of the quiet times. I'd be wondering whom to call. I'd spread letters on the Internet. After working for six years every day then you're not working, suddenly you have to motivate yourself to go to dance class. Life has taught me how to discipline myself," she says.

Humility came along with the discipline. "If people think that who they are depends on their job or how popular they are, then it's just a bunch of b---s---. At the end of the day, it's just you. It's not what you do, it's not who you know or who you hang out with. It's you. To look deep inside yourself and to look at your flaws make you more a real person. Manila can get into somebody's head with all the freebies, and designers throwing clothes at you and asking you to wear them. After working with the

NY/p.C5

'There's a stigma that if you're beautiful you're a bitch because you act superior'



GISELLE'S flat stomach is attributed to Pilates and dance classes in Broadway.

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Clean up and clear out

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

For us girls, this is going-deep-into-the-closet time, a time for closure—both in our fashion size, and life

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I HAD this smart urge on New Year's Eve and New Year's day to turn off my cell phone. Celebrate the first day of the year by tuning out, shutting out the world, just sticking to family—and still live to tell what it's like not to get text messages from the outside world. (Can you even remember what life was like without a cell phone?)

Instead I settled for good old fireworks. Strangely, this New Year's Eve must have been the first time, ever, that my folks didn't mind that we—my brother and I and our families—set off all kinds of ear-and-hand-splitting firecrackers on the lawn. (Daddy and Mommy never let my brother play with firecrackers as we were growing up, which is why he's such a pyromaniac now.) Mommy didn't panic for her Bermuda grass and, for a change, watched us from her lanai—without paranoia. Indeed, time has a way of narrowing generation gaps—you grow older, as your folks stay old, and then your paranoias meet and match. If only for that, I loved last New Year's Eve in my mom's garden.

With the blast over, here's a must-do at year's start. Clean out the closet, take stock of what you need and what you don't. That goes for the rest of the house. For us women (I can't speak for men; only girls and gays) digging deep into closets/dressers is like going deep into Kabul—you never know what lies waiting in the caves. Get set for some reality jolt.

You find snug stretch tops and seductive lingerie **Mother Ricky** always throws your way—what he can't wear he's damn sure you can (wrong!), halters and spaghetti straps, floral minis, worse, polka-dot playwear of midrib top and hotpants, and so on. What the diggings unearth get more and more ancient. The more ancient they are, the more remote they are from your current weight.

The '70s and '80s are back in fashion, but your size during those years isn't. A thousand years from now, archeologists will advance in their field by digging up the hoard of the fashionistas and shopaholics among us, particularly those who can't find it in their psyche to throw away anything at all. My good friend **Teyet**, for instance, has kept even shopping bags from the '60s.

But back to the closet. There's a crepe baby-doll dress by **Inno** which, I'm sure, if I wear now will make me look like Barbie's aunt. Simply because two-inch-above-the-knee hemline isn't me anymore. Then there are the milestone (mine) creations by **Auggie**: the Victorian lace/ruffle dress, the leg-of-mutton taffeta, the cinched-waist denim suits, among others. Getting into them will bring back to mind the 9/11 WTC disaster—I will implode. There's a **Gaupo** '50ish ankle-length full skirt, garterized waist (there's hope in that stretchability), with a backless halter top whose drape you can tie in a sash—wearable now but only with a shawl. Also, I come across **Caloy Badidoy**'s gold skirt and blouse, which I must keep because Caloy inexplicably did them for me two months before he died.

This annual closet inventory must end with a resolution for us girls. Call it closure and acceptance. That is, you'll never be a size 4 again. Accept that and your closet will be a bit cleaner, clearer and I can finally let Auggie have his triumphant I-told-you-so, followed by a drag on his Winston.

Do with your life what you do with your closet at year's start. Namely:

Clean it up, clear it out. Distinguish the excess and superfluous from the basic and enhancing. Discern, then decide. Sometimes, getting rid of excess baggage takes courage and a lot of honesty. Decision never comes easy, especially when the excess fat has clung to the bones. (Yes, even in relationships.) When the clearing is done, leave the space free for new beginnings.

The past is past; let the present define a life of its own. The '70s/'80s is back—but only in fashion and, even then, only as a statement of whimsy. I had an interesting night chat with **Joey Panlilio** who said, too bad for this generation busy recycling music and fashion from the '70s, "but our '70s will never be back." It's ours alone—our martial law years, the tug-of-war between our bourgeois ways and social conscience, our angst, our never-trust-anyone-above-30 psyche, the psychedelia of weeds and LSD, our Beatles, Monkees and Motown, our minis and net stockings, our Brut and English Leather. We thrived on having heavy baggage. Our generation tried and longed to carry the country's burden on our shoulders. In contrast, for today's kids, the dilemma is—where to go, Libis or Rockwell? In your personal scheme of things as well, leave the past alone and behind.

Zen is not a brand. Neither is it a candle nor an aromatherapy soap. With the volume and kinds of candles we've been getting—as I'm sure you've been also—we can light up a memorial park. Yet ironically, these candles, meant to free up the mind and senses, clog up my storage space. And I'm not even counting the herbal soap. Frankly, it's a challenge trying to figure out what to do with all these candles—how to strategically position them in the house and in the office, and how to mix the scents just as strategically. Zen isn't only a long-running buzzword. It's also a most saleable item—from candles to Zen gardens, fountains and incense holders. Trouble is, it's not branding alone. If only these candles could guide your way to your center, to your core. Zen is the pursuit of clarity, harmony and balance, with yourself and your universe. In short, it's what I'm not this January—not yet.

It's not the trends, it's your pulse. This is the time for forecasting trends—I can babble on and on about the fashion looks this year. It's my job and I'm bored with it. Honestly, trend-forecasting alone doesn't make sense anymore, because there's a trend to suit each individual's bias. Trends are a dime a dozen now; with retail brands having such high sales targets, they have to start trends every season. But what matters is your pulse. Learn your identity, what you like in the market and how it jibes with your lifestyle. Concretely, for instance, at the start of each day, define your mood (are you glorious, or have you just been dumped?), then your function (you facing the CEO today, or just your press release writer?), then your tolerance for adventure (a day for faux Chanel chain belt, or just leather belt, or worse, gartered waist?), then how you'll end your day (with a frog or a prince?). Answer these questions and you won't be a sucker for those mall display windows (or for us fashion writers).

Go with the flow. It's good to build castles on the sand, but if they keep on being swept away, it's time to know the tide. One must always be a fighter and a go-getter, but there are times no matter your blood and sweat, things just don't gel and they slip through your hands. In such moments, just go with the flow, not against it.

But know your passion. Hold it up against your budget—and keep your faith. It's what will keep you going this year, and the year after.

E-mail the author at tsanjuan @skyinet.net

Expo
May 3-5, 2002
rade Center Metr

VAL E. Houston (center), commercial officer of the US Commercial Service of the Department of Commerce, US embassy, signs an agreement with Zeno B. Martinez, president of MPG Inc., organizer of Motherhood and Woman Expo, which marks the participation of a US Pavilion at the first International Exhibition on Women, Mothers and Children's Needs on May 3-5 at the World Center, Manila. The US Pavilion will showcase new-to-market and established US consumer goods and business systems for Philippine buyers and entrepreneurs. Witnessing the event is Cleo A. Alday, senior commercial specialist of the US Commercial Service. Call 852-7618 to -19 or fax 852-7620.

"We've had dinner a couple of times...
seen a movie a couple of times...
@#%*! a couple of times...
but that's not love."

Paolo Montalban is Raul, a young man with many hot and passionate relationships, all fleeting, none lasting.

A film by Laurice Guillen
American ADOBO
Lutong New York. Lasang Pinoy.
OPENS ON JANUARY 16

NY makes . . .

(From page C4)

best makeup artists like Juan Sarte and Jing Monis, I refused to be done up by anybody else. Little things like that come with the stature and image. In reality you don't need those."

Letting go

When Giselle rented an apartment in New York, she thought she could easily get a job and pay for the year-long lease. "At the end of nine months, I was worried. I still hadn't gotten a job. I was expecting to land a gig just like that. I had so much faith in myself. I had done so much work in Manila for six years. I thought that I would just audition and they'd fall in love with me. I had to worry about how I was going to support myself. I've been working since I was young. I don't depend on anybody financially. I was faced with the problem of how to make money without compromising my integrity," she says.

Giselle struck a compromise. She'd get work in Manila. With her savings, she could support her studies in New York.

Her round-trip ticket was sponsored by Benefon. The company flew her in from New York to host the launch of a new handset. Discovery Suites is hosting her stay until February in exchange for being the emcee of the New Year's Eve show. Offers have been coming through her representative, Genesis.

Although Giselle could easily go on a bread trip in Manila and lead a pampered life, she prefers to return to New York for a change of perspective.

"If I want the easy way out, I can stay here forever and live it up. I think it's through struggle that we become better people. When I was walking in the park, I kept wishing 'If only I were in Manila.' Then I realized I couldn't keep comparing New York and Manila. Manila was like my safety net. Here I know everything is going to be easy. I keep thinking that I'm trying to establish myself in New York. Do I want to get away and live it up, save money and do what I love to do? As much as I love to stay longer, I can't. Auditions happen. This is my golden opportunity," says Giselle.

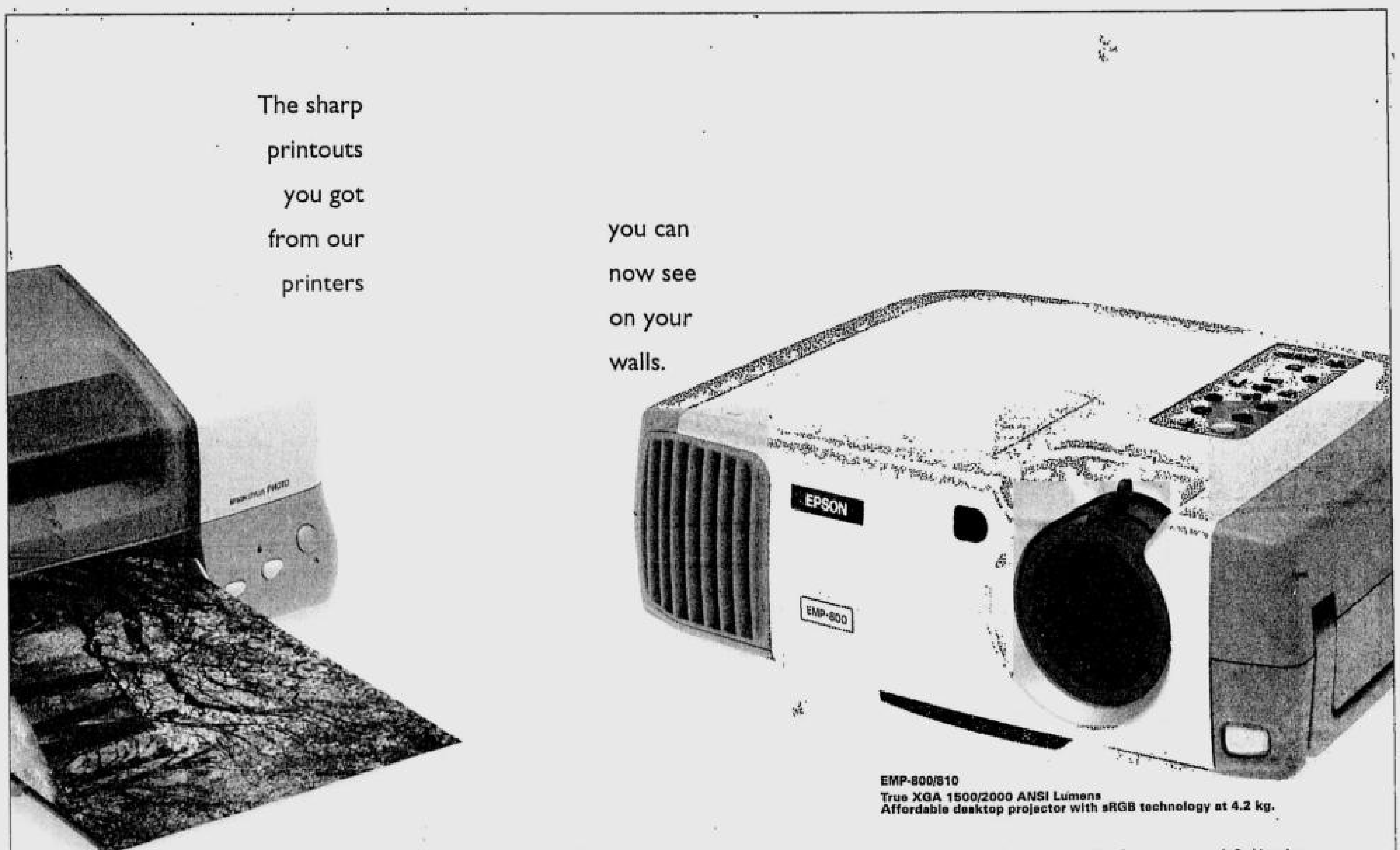
If in Manila Giselle acquired income, projects, perks and adulation, in New York she has to give up her status. In a world where glamour, name and fame are cherished, she refuses to have her values corrupted by their misleading attractions.

"I've gone through a lot of s--t. When I felt down, God was generous. I've experienced it first hand. When a door closes and you think it's so dark, He opens a little window. Be thankful for what you have. I am a dreamer. I love to go after my goals and I intend to do so now. If it doesn't happen, I'm not going to dwell on it. I have the personality to let go considering how ambitious I am. If anything I'll become more patient. I don't know why I'm in such a rush. I'm only 23."

As the adage goes, one must let go to attain peace.

The sharp printouts you got from our printers

you can now see on your walls.



EMP-800/810
True XGA 1500/2000 ANSI Lumens
Affordable desktop projector with sRGB technology at 4.2 kg.

Our line of multimedia LCD portable projectors gives you the same excellent quality images you get from Epson printers. Plus, features you won't find in other projectors. Like our patented Panel-On-Prism technology (POP) technology that guarantees you'll always get crisp, clear images, even after years of use. Or, our revolutionary DAR (Digital Active Resizing) technology which supports a wide array of resolutions making our projectors more compatible and versatile than others. Or, the built-in Effect Function, a standard feature on all our projectors. It allows you to select the cursor, highlighter, or underlining features to emphasize the important points in your presentation. Epson Multimedia LCD projectors not only give you better presentations, they set the standard.

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Ultraportable affordably-priced projector at only 3.1 kg.

EMP-505
True SVGA 1100 ANSI Lumens
Ultraportable value projector with Easy MP Technology for PC-less presentation at only 2.7 kg.

EMP-703
True XGA 1000 ANSI Lumens
Ultraportable value projector at only 2.6 kg.

EMP-715
True XGA 1200 ANSI Lumens
Revolutionary EasyMP Technology for PC-less presentations at only 2.7 kg.

EMP-600
True SVGA 1700 ANSI Lumens
Affordable desktop projector with sRGB technology at only 4.2 kg.

EMP-5600
True SVGA 2200 ANSI Lumens
Ultra-Bright desktop projector at only 6.8 kg.

EMP-8100
True XGA 3200 ANSI Lumens
Ultra-Bright installation projector at only 8.3 kg.

EMP-8150
True XGA 3200 ANSI Lumens
The World's first network projector using EasyMP. net at only 9.1 kg.

EMP-9100
True SXGA 2400 ANSI Lumens
Ultra-Bright installation projector for real CAD users at only 8.3 kg.

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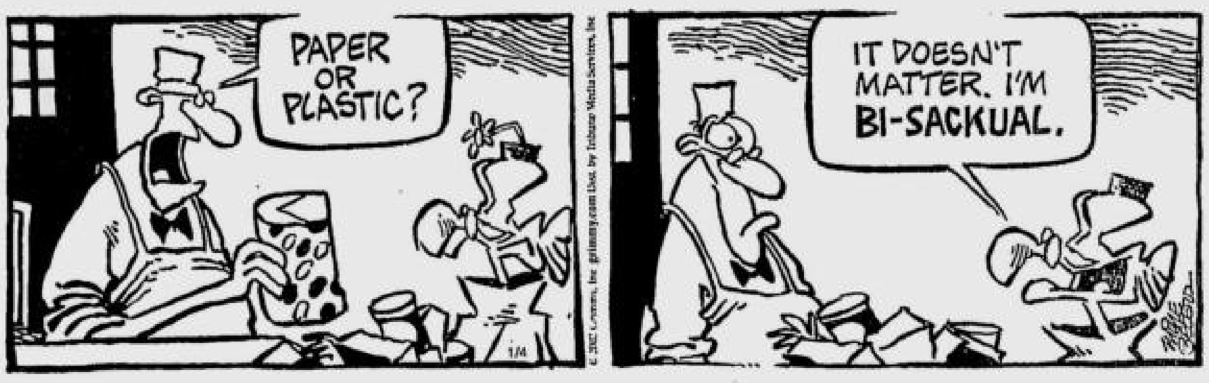
COMIC Relief

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


PAPER OR PLASTIC?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. I'M BI-SACKUAL.
1/4
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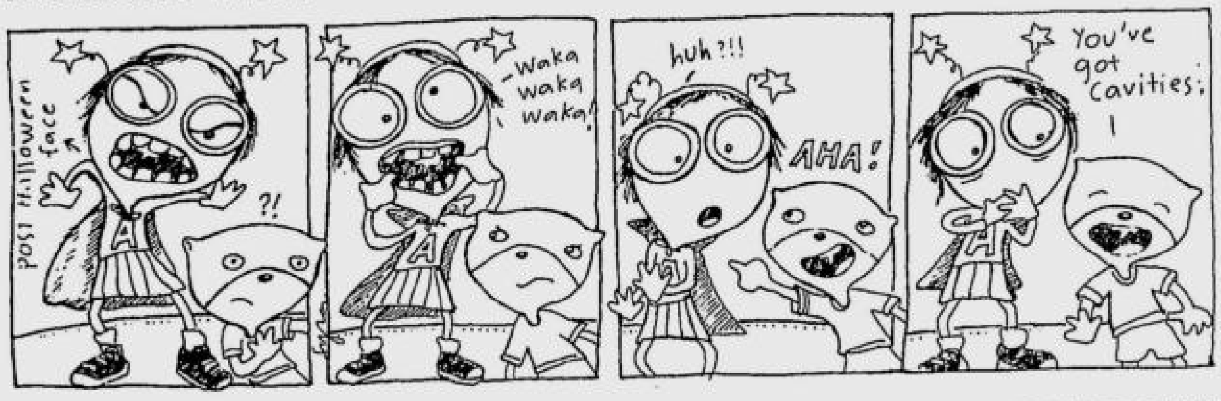
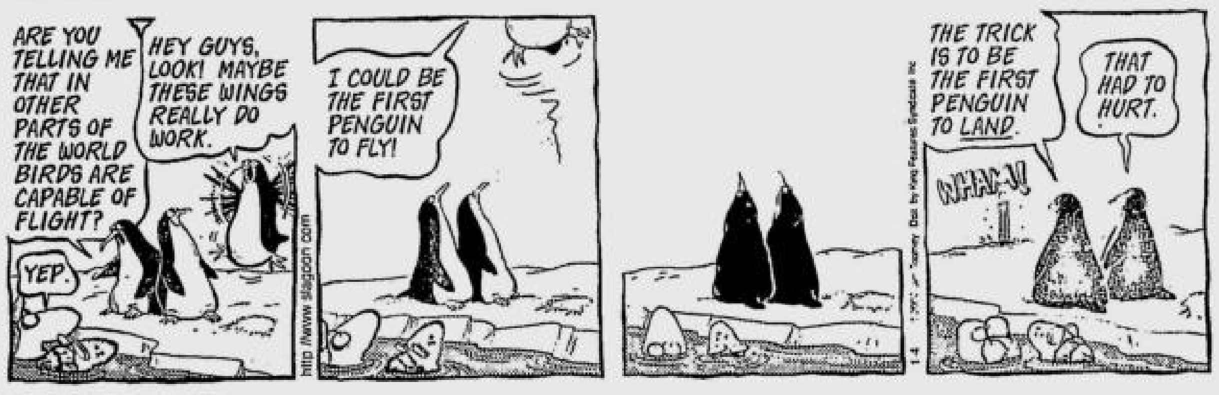
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


post Halloween face
?!
Waka waka waka!
huh?!!
AHA!
You've got cavities!

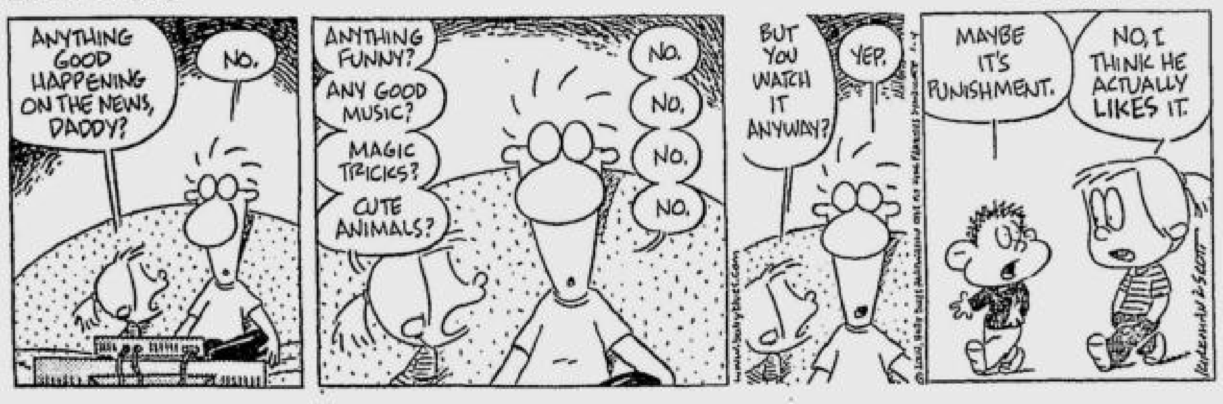
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD BIRDS ARE CAPABLE OF FLIGHT?
YEP.
HEY GUYS, LOOK! MAYBE THESE WINGS REALLY DO WORK.
I COULD BE THE FIRST PENGUIN TO FLY!
THE TRICK IS TO BE THE FIRST PENGUIN TO LAND.
THAT HAD TO HURT.
WHAM!
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ANYTHING GOOD HAPPENING ON THE NEWS, DADDY?
NO.
ANYTHING FUNNY?
ANY GOOD MUSIC?
MAGIC TRICKS?
CUTE ANIMALS?
NO.
NO.
NO.
NO.
BUT YOU WATCH IT ANYWAY?
YEP.
MAYBE IT'S PUNISHMENT.
NO, I THINK HE ACTUALLY LIKES IT.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Melissa Morgan, Lindsay Kennedy, Dyan Cannon, John McLaughlin

Happy Birthday: Too much on your plate will lead to confusion and frustrations this year. Sit down, be particular and don't let anyone take advantage of your talents. Do what's best for you and you will find the satisfaction you are looking for. Your numbers are 8, 13, 21, 26, 35, 39

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't just sit there, make your move. Career opportunities must be taken advantage of. Your actions will put you in a favorable position.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Present your ideas to others today. You will have opportunities to socialize with some special people who may be able to point you in the right direction regarding your future.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Expect to experience some changes at home. You should be checking into investments that could in fact make life a whole lot easier for you down the road.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take advantage of your communication skills by interacting with people who can help you get what you want. You will be able to begin new partnerships that will lead to prosperous endeavors.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If you haven't already begun to make the necessary changes that will help you excel in your chosen field you may want to give yourself a shake and start moving.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't question everything, just act. The more time you waste, the further behind you will become. Believe in yourself and your abilities and speak with authority.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Keep things to yourself for the time being. If you let too many people in on your secret or intentions you may jinx your chances of getting what you want.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): If you want to get ahead you'll have to get out and do things with people who have a little clout. The more time spent with those who can help you, the further you'll go.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Too much too fast will be your downfall. Check your motives before you say something that might make someone else look bad. You will end up having regrets if you don't act in kindness.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You will make gains if you are quick to take advantage of offers being made. Your clear-cut manner will win the favors you've been looking for. Support will be yours.

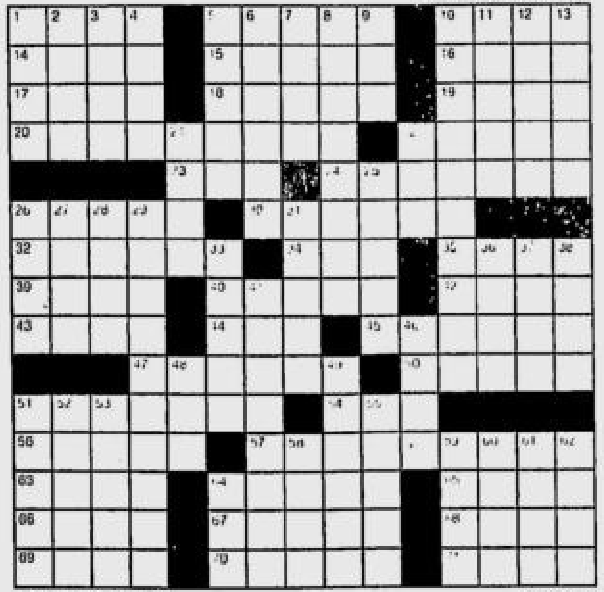
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Investment opportunities look prosperous. You can make your money stretch if you are careful not to spend on unnecessary items. Changes to your home will bring comfort and joy to you and others.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): This is a great day to spend with the one you love. If you're single, get out and meet new people and romance will develop.

Birthday Baby: You have built-in charm as well as a serious side that will help you to help those in need. You are giving, loyal and very precise in all that you do.

DAILY CROSSWORD

IMSPuzzles@aol.com



By James Hinish
Williamsburg, VA

11/20/01

ACROSS
1 Fundamentals
5 Bow of film
10 Pied Piper's pack
14 King of Israel (842-815 B.C.)
15 Flax product
16 Mass of ice
17 Affirm positively
18 Rocker John
19 Flying toy
20 1797 scandal
22 Invited
23 & so on
24 Perch relatives
26 Moist, sticky coating
30 Rival of Athens
32 Dicker
34 Fabrication
35 Carrel furniture
39 Bomb type
40 Bob Hope film, "Call Me __"
42 Panelist Chase
43 Word before theory or warfare
44 Devour
45 1988 PGA Championship winner
47 Revolt
50 Overact
51 "Waiting to Exhale" star Angela
54 N.T. book
56 Started the fire again
57 LP pioneer
63 Red explorer?
64 Tantalize
65 Ritzy wheels
66 Radames' love
67 Colorado ski resort
68 Judah's son
69 Bow-stern connection
70 Customers
71 Brown shades

DOWN
1 Trojan War hero
2 Group of larks
3 At the home of: Fr.
4 Chapter of the Koran
5 Dissevered
6 Fragrant flowers
7 Opposing
8 Decree again
9 __ Arbor, MI
10 Former Redskins home
11 The same
12 Carrier
13 Burpee order
21 Lay one's hands on
22 Fine work
25 Neighborhoods
26 Uneven cut
27 Past due
28 Frankenstein's assistant
29 Hollywood entertainment extravaganza
31 Builders' maps
33 Film-critic Roger
36 Tickle Me __
37 Game played with 32 cards
38 "Citizen __"
41 Diner server
46 Son of Leah
48 Favorite
49 Art rubber
51 Snap
52 Eaglet's residence
53 Lose traction
55 Levels
58 Cod or May
59 Blood formation
60 Singer Turner
61 Arabian sultanate
62 Moody and Wood
64 Sigma follower

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

O	N	U	S		E	D	G	E	S		A	G	E	D
C	O	L	E		S	A	R	G	E		T	E	R	I
C	O	N	C	E	P	T	I	O	N		E	S	S	O
U	N	A	L	L	I	E	D		O	R	A	T	E	S
R	E	S	U	M	E	S		D	R	A	M	A		
			D	E	S		M	A	I	N	S	T	A	Y
I	N	F	E	R		B	I	R	T	H		I	S	U
T	A	O	S		B	E	T	T	A		S	O	I	L
C	P	R		D	E	A	T	H		D	E	N	S	E
H	A	M	M	O	C	K	S		S	E	R			
		A	U	R	A	S		S	T	A	R	E	A	T
P	E	T	R	E	L		A	L	A	N	A	L	D	A
I	L	I	A		M	A	T	U	R	A	T	I	O	N
T	O	O	L		E	S	T	E	R		E	S	P	Y
A	N	N	S		D	A	N	D	Y		S	E	T	A

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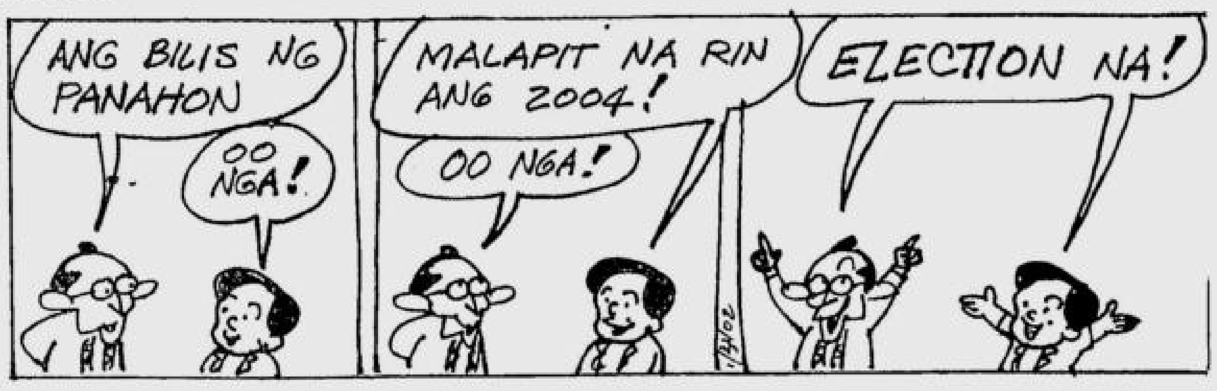
11/20/01

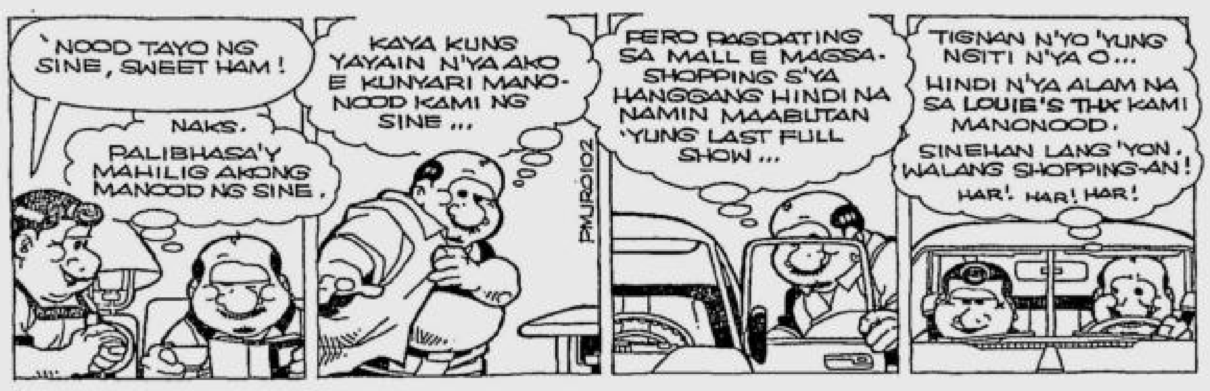
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG BILIS NG PANAHON
OO NGA!
MALAPIT NA RIN ANG 2004!
OO NGA!
ELECTION NA!
1/4/02

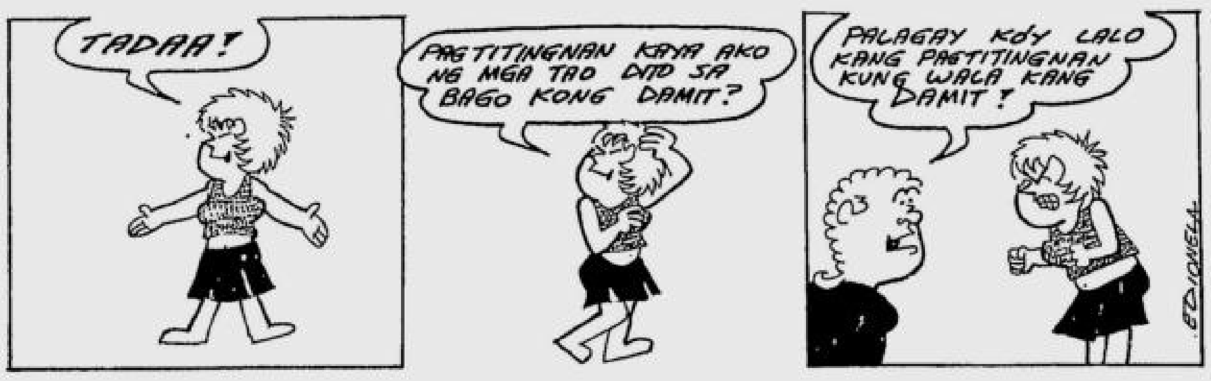
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'NOOD TAYO NG SINE, SWEET HAM!
NAKS.
PALIBHASA'Y MAHILIG AKONG MANOOD NG SINE.
KAYA KUNG YAYAIN N'YA AKO E KUNYARI MANONOOD KAMI NG SINE ...
PMJR0102
PERO PAGDATING SA MALL E MAGSA-SHOPPING S'YA HANGGANG HINDI NA NAMIN MAABUTAN 'YUNG LAST FULL SHOW ...
TIGNAN N'YO 'YUNG NGITI N'YA O ...
HINDI N'YA ALAM NA SA LOUIE'S THX KAMI MANONOOD.
SINEHAN LANG 'YON. WALANG SHOPPING-AN!
HAR! HAR! HAR!

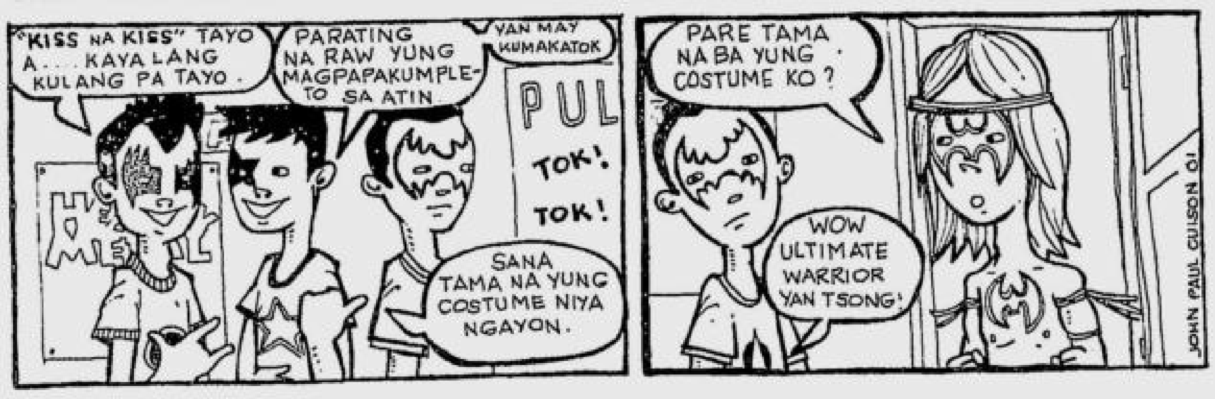
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


TADAA!
PAGTITINGNAN KAYA AKO NG MGA TAO DITO SA BAGO KONG DAMIT?
PALAGAY KO'Y LALO KANG PAGTITINGNAN KUNG WALA KANG DAMIT!
EDIONELA

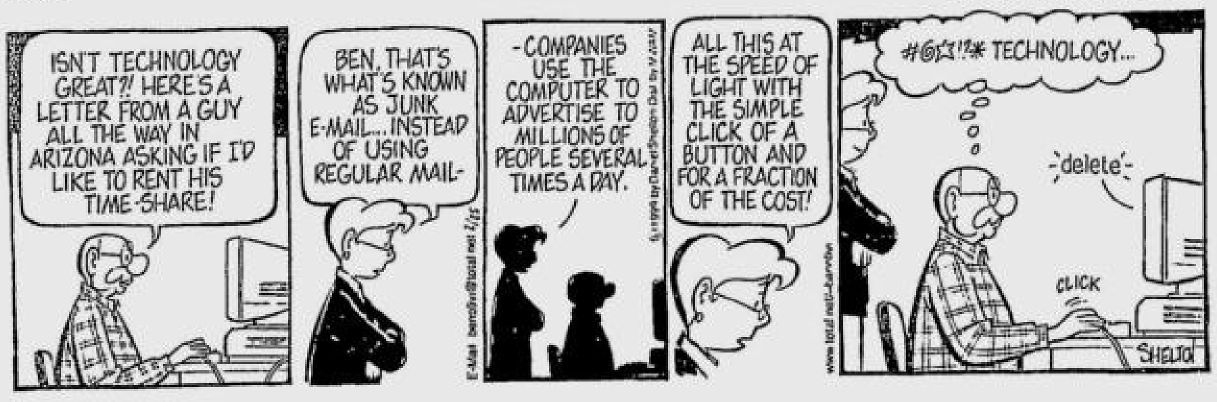
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


"KISS NA KISS" TAYO A.... KAYA LANG KULANG PA TAYO.
PARATING NA RAW YUNG MAGPAPAKUMPLETO SA ATIN.
YAN MAY KUMAKATOK
PUL
TOK! TOK!
SANA TAMA NA YUNG COSTUME NIYA NGAYON.
PARE TAMA NA BA YUNG COSTUME KO?
WOW ULTIMATE WARRIOR YAN TSONG!
JOHN PAUL CUISON 01

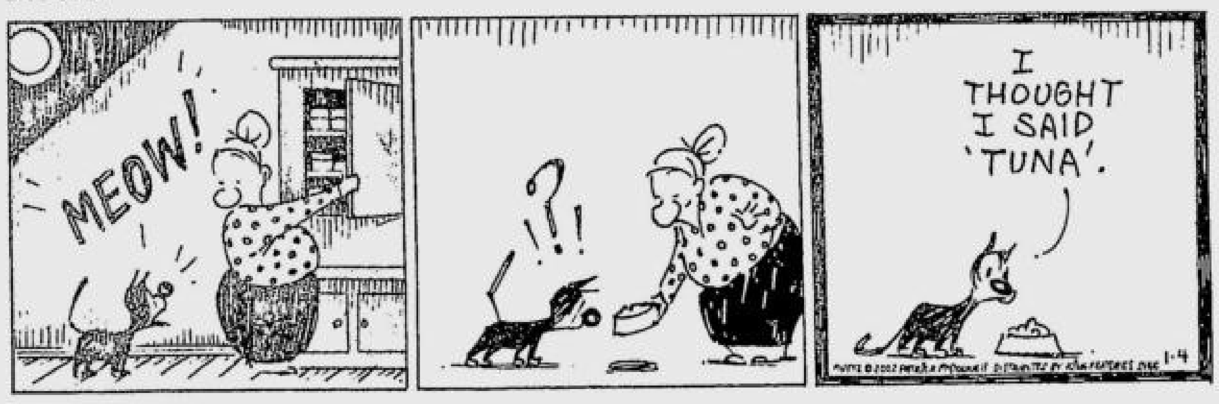
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


ISN'T TECHNOLOGY GREAT?! HERE'S A LETTER FROM A GUY ALL THE WAY IN ARIZONA ASKING IF I'D LIKE TO RENT HIS TIME-SHARE!
BEN, THAT'S WHAT'S KNOWN AS JUNK E-MAIL... INSTEAD OF USING REGULAR MAIL-
-COMPANIES USE THE COMPUTER TO ADVERTISE TO MILLIONS OF PEOPLE SEVERAL TIMES A DAY.
ALL THIS AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT WITH THE SIMPLE CLICK OF A BUTTON AND FOR A FRACTION OF THE COST!
#@☆!?* TECHNOLOGY...
delete
CLICK
SHELTON

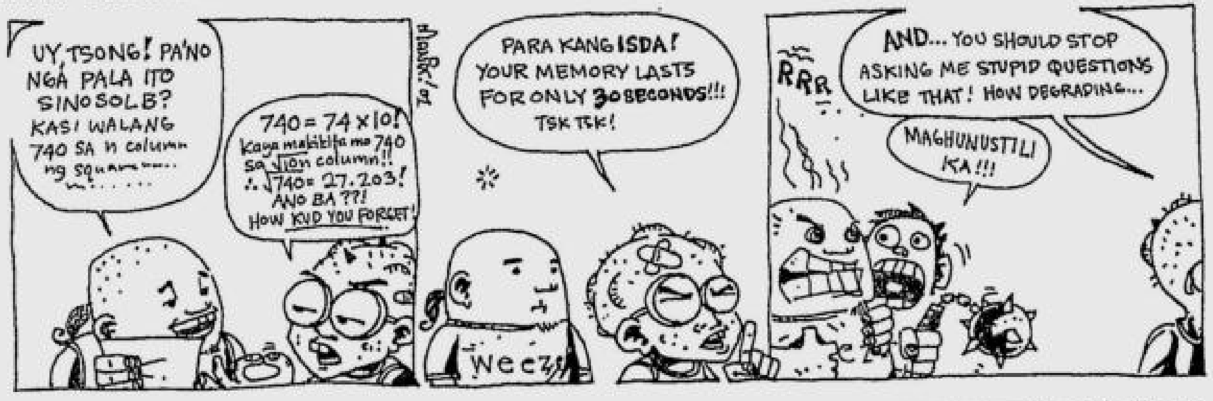
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MEOW!
?
I THOUGHT I SAID 'TUNA'.
1-4

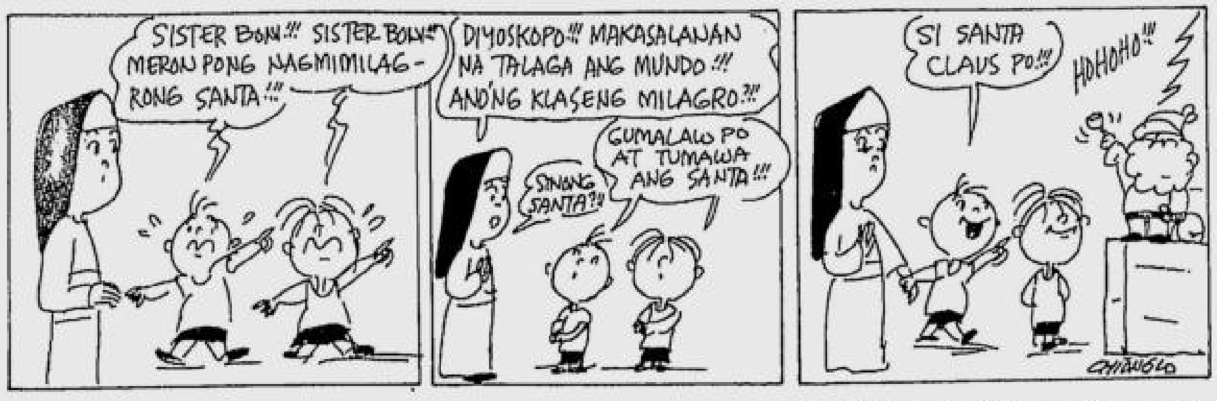
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY, TSONG! PA'NO NGA PALA ITO SINOSOLB? KASI WALANG 740 SA h column ng square....
740 = 74 x 10! Kaya makikita mo 740 sa √ion column!! ∴ √740 = 27.203! ANO BA ??! HOW KUD YOU FORGET!
PARA KANG ISDA! YOUR MEMORY LASTS FOR ONLY 30 SECONDS!!! TSK TSK!
Weezy
RRR
AND... YOU SHOULD STOP ASKING ME STUPID QUESTIONS LIKE THAT! HOW DEGRADING...
MAGHUNUSTILI KA!!!

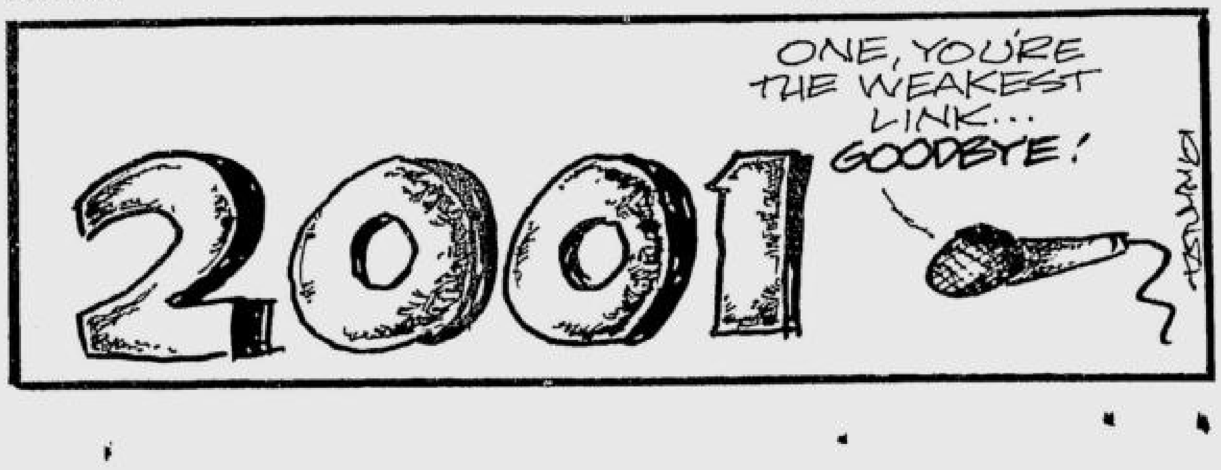
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BON!!! SISTER BON!!! MERON PONG NAGMIMILAGRONG SANTA!!!
DIYOSKOPO!!! MAKASALANAN NA TALAGA ANG MUNDO!!! ANO'NG KLASENG MILAGRO?!!
SINONG SANTA?!!
GUMALAW PO AT TUMAWA ANG SANTA!!!
SI SANTA CLAUS PO!!!
HOHOHO!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


2001
ONE, YOU'RE THE WEAKEST LINK... GOODBYE!

The force and spirit of enthusiasm

A style supremo, a fave fotog, a creative director, a makeup maestro, the model of the year and the Circus de Ballet spark the Rabelasian mood of fire, play and creativity

RED-ORANGE column with sarong in silk crepe is slashed at the back to reveal subtle sexiness.

CREDITS:
HAIR AND MAKEUP:
PATRICK ROSAS
MODEL :
JOAN BITAGCOL,
ROEHR-MEGA FEMALE
RUNWAY
MODEL OF THE YEAR
LOCATION:
STAR CITY THEATER
SPECIAL THANKS TO
FRED AND LISA ELIZALDE
CIRCUS DE BALLET:
ACROBAT–
ROBERTO ALVAREZ
SINGLE TRAPEZE–
SORAYA BALDOMERO
CONTORTIONIST–
JOSEPHINE CELERIO
CONTORTIONIST–
ELINOR CATAMPING
ACROBAT–
ALFONSO REYES
ACROBAT–
ROBERT BELGICA
STILT WALKER–
JORDAN TAPINAS
STILT WALKER–
ANTONIO PALER JR.
MAGICIAN–
DEMETRIO CUIZON
ACROBAT–
ROMUALDO CATAMPING
CAMEL–
ROLANDO CATAMPING
CAMEL–
RYAN CATAMPING
HORSE–
RICARDO CATAMPING
FIRE BLOWER–
CHARLIE LYNNE CUICO
FIRE BLOWER–
EDGAR GENOVE
STILT WALKER–
WILSON BAGAN
STILT WALKER–
MICHAEL TIANA
UNICYCLIST–
VIRGILIO BAGAN CRUZ
ADDITIONAL ACROBAT–
ROEL VILLANUEVA
ADDITIONAL ACROBAT–
RAFAEL VISTER JR.
BACKUP FIRE BLOWER–
JESUS ARCEGA

**PHOTOS BY
JUN DE LEON**
PICTORIAL DIRECTION
BY **ANTONIO SALAC
SANTOS**
PAGE DESIGN BY
LYNETT VILLARIBA

A SCHOLAR of genius once pointed out that achievers such as Sir Isaac Newton, who discovered the law of gravity, did not labor over an enigma from a sense of obligation. They did it from a sense of happiness, because the challenge fascinated them and filled them with thrill.

Discipline and focus have their limits. Discipline can become a goal in itself, and an addictive source of pride. Thus, the term workaholic. It can make you obsessed with your ability for work, and ignore the fact that truly creative leaps of the spirit are made in a state of play.

The Greeks believed in *ethousiasmos*, the time when "divinity poured into the selfless void." Even at work, enthusiasm comes across as an intimation of this powerful force.

Passion and enthusiasm are the threads that bind everybody in this pictorial at Star City theater. If there's one thing that designer Auggie Cordero, photographer Jun de Leon, freelance creative director Tonton Santos, makeup artist Patrick Rosas, model Joan Bitagcol, balletmaster Osias Barroso and the Circus de Ballet have in common, it's their conviction in their art. Although they all put a lot of effort in their work, they experience tirelessness and exhilaration. It's as if energy is flowing into them from a deep inner spring.

Take the case of Barroso, the principal danseur and rehearsal master of Ballet Manila. Before Star City opened for the holiday season, he was working from 8 a.m. till 10 p.m. In the mornings, he choreographed "Belen" of the Circus de Ballet. For the rest of the afternoon and evening, he was rehearsing for "The Nutcracker." The Circus de Ballet was conceived by tycoon Fred Elizalde, who was inspired by the Cirque de Soleil. The Circus de Ballet combines acrobats, contortionists, gymnasts and singers with classically trained dancers. Many of the circus performers learned their craft from their forebears. Barroso's job was to bring to their craft the conventions of theater. From November to Jan. 13, the company is running an average of five to seven shows a day.

Last Christmas, "Belen" went on from 1 p.m.-1 a.m. the next day, a total of 13 shows. Barroso observed that the more shows they did in one day, the fewer errors were committed. "Everybody's adrenaline was high," he said.

What drives Barroso and the circus performers to peak performances, even if they keep on doing the same thing over and over?

Barroso says it's the satisfaction of seeing all cast members work in unity and cooperation. It's equally satisfying to play to an appreciative audience.

Style guru

Like the circus artists, designer Auggie Cordero works odd hours. After he closes shop, he does his research at home. Lately, he's been reading up on the Yves St. Laurent landmark collections in the '70s, namely the fantasy look, the smoking suit and the safari collection. When he's inspired, he's constantly stewing designs in his mind.

To herald the forecast of the '70s redux, INQUIRER asked Cordero, touted as the style guru of that decade, to create the collection.

The theatrical attitude, declared by Paris to be one of the major trends for 2002, was the theme of the shoot. The palette was bold and festive, replete with clashing colors. Dramatic effects were set on cold, glazed fabrics such as graphic designs and beadwork on satin, crepe, devore velvets, charmante satin and muslin.

The collection bore Cordero's trademarks—deceptively simple silhouettes, subtle cutwork, judicious use of lace and colors with deep

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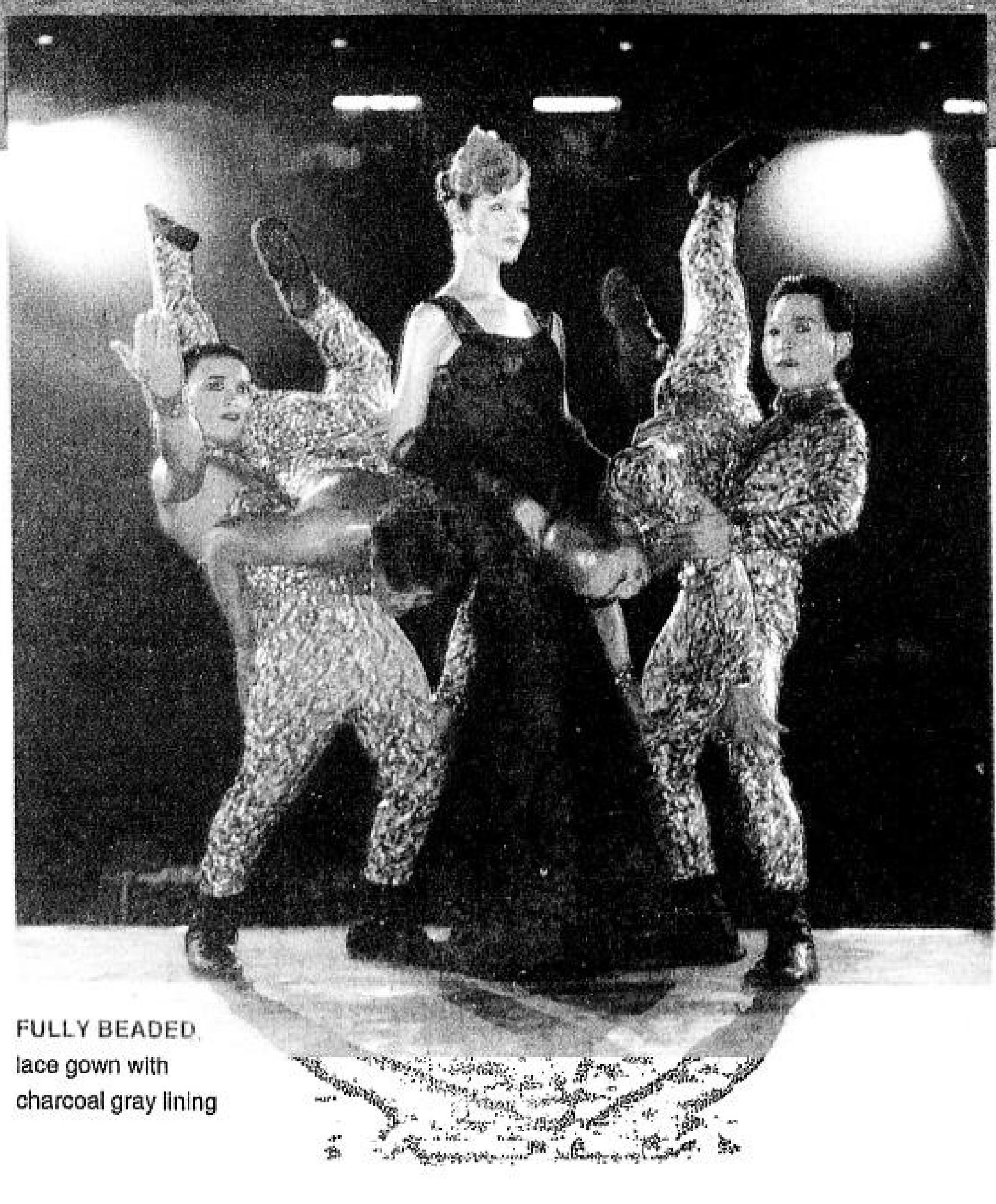
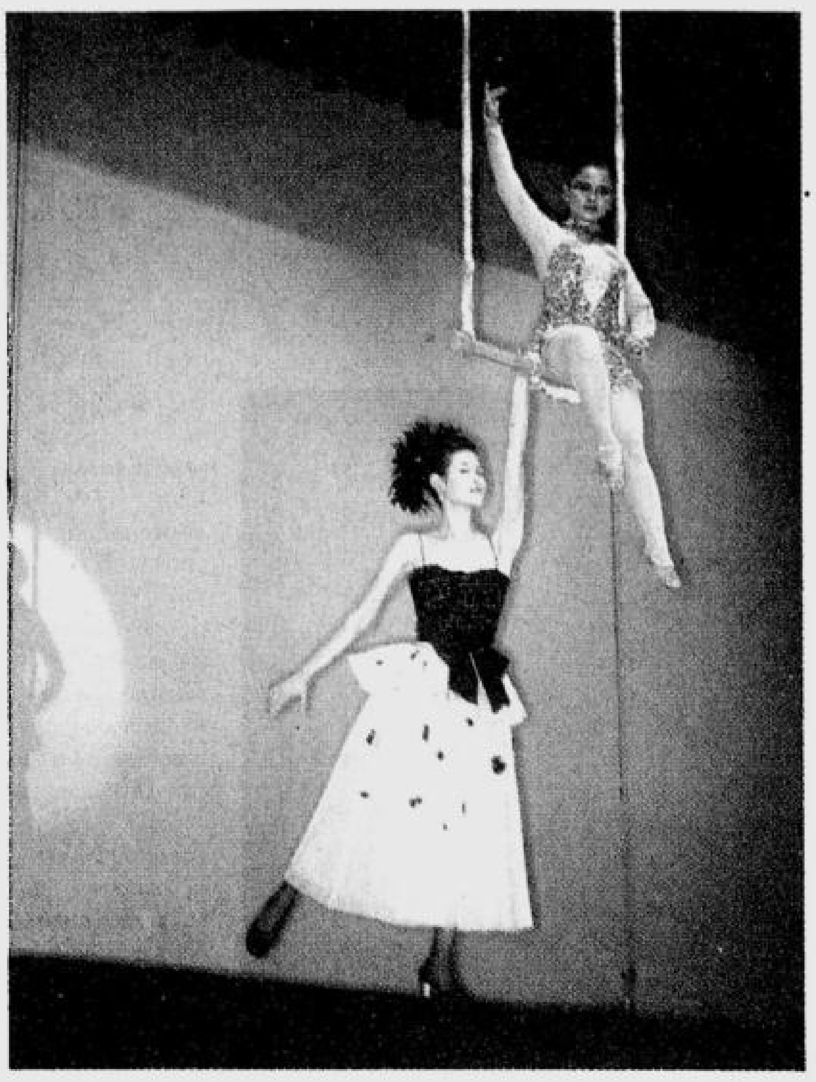


FULLY BEADED lace gown with charcoal gray lining



INSPIRED BY the Romantic tutu. The lace top with peplum waist goes with an electric-pleated tulle skirt.

PRINCESS-CUT ivory tulle gown with silk flowers

The force and spirit of enthusiasm

From page C7

undertones. The Cordero woman is demure, never overtly sensual. Living by the energy of her inner spirit, she is enthusiastic about the things that she feels positive.

Makeup artist Patrick Rosas created a theatrical look without being excessive. A hint of the circus performer in the model allowed her to blend with the cast and still go to a party and knock 'em out. Rosas is one of the busiest artists around. He can remove 20 years from a woman's face with just a sponge, concealer and foundation or show the subject's unlimited possibilities in changing their looks. For many years, Rosas invested a lot of his time on editorial work that was far from financially rewarding compared to a wedding package. His sheer love of work has kept him humble.

Reunion

Photographer Jun de Leon and freelance creative director Tonton Santos were reunited for this shoot. Their friendship dates back to the days of the Daily Express. Santos worked in the advertising department, doing the supplements while de Leon was a photojournalist. In the early '70s, fashion pictorials were about mannequins in antiseptic settings. When the two collaborated on a supplement, they shot a model, wearing a Soen nightie, descending a fire escape. The photograph became the talk of the town because it broke away from conventions.

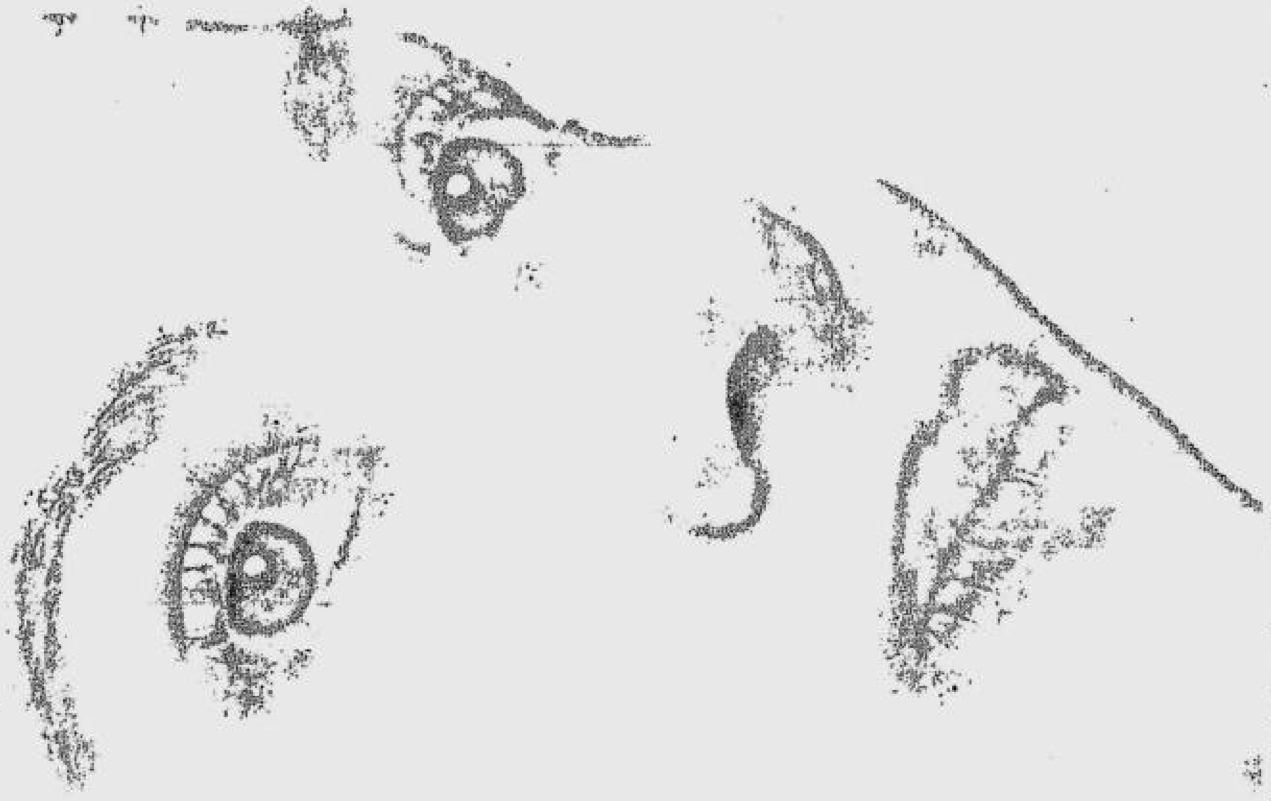
SILK ORGANZA gown, accented with a brooch

Today, fashion photography knows no boundaries or conventions. In the long run, what matter are the essential elements that make a good picture such as composition, light and shadow, balance and symmetry, mass and volume, perspective, and, even more important, the soul.

After every Polaroid, De Leon and Santos had more discussions about aesthetics rather than the *golpe de gulat* value. When De Leon dominates the set, you can feel his stirring of emotions and tenacity.

Like joy, enthusiasm is contagious. You can diffuse it for others to pick up and use. Why not cultivate enthusiasm as the driving force throughout the year?

Marge C. Enriquez



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